











## PUBLISHERS' NOTE

*The theme of this book is the slow ripening of acquaintanceship into love. Apart from the wide scope and varied interest of the letters themselves, its value lies in the deep yet fresh maturity of the human relationships portrayed.*

*The letters are those of real persons whose identity is concealed. In their original language their sale has been immense and editions are appearing in many other countries.*

# The Heart Awakes

## Letters of Love

*Translated by Cyrus Brooks  
and Marjorie Laurie*



# The Heart Awakes

Letters of Love

Edited by M. B. Kennicott

London

George Allen & Unwin Ltd

*The original, "Das Herz ist Wach," was published by  
the Rainer Wunderlich Verlag in 1935*

FIRST PUBLISHED IN ENGLISH 1936

*All rights reserved*

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY  
UNWIN BROTHERS LTD., WOKING

## FOR THE READER

THIS book consists of an exchange of letters between living persons. For obvious reasons the external circumstances of the writers have been so changed that any attempt to identify them would be bound to fail. The reader can the more readily renounce any such attempt, as it could not increase the essential value of the human relationships which are here revealed. All that is of value in this inner sense is retained in this book without distortion or alteration.

M. B. KENNICOTT



# THE HEART AWAKES

LE PRÉ AUX MÉLÈZES, GENEVA,

*March 21, 1930*

MY DEAR MADAM,

I know you are at present moving house, but may I, at the risk of increasing the confusion, give myself the pleasure of sending you the old picture of pomegranate blossom which was in the collection we looked through yesterday? Since you will be taking down all your pictures and hanging them afresh, you may perhaps find room for it. It was a great satisfaction to me that you thought it the finest of the Venetian engravings. I, too, have always considered it the best, without question. And I was really delighted—as indeed I was with all that happened yesterday afternoon—when you said that the stains which lend such inimitable delicacy of tone to these old engravings were “almost an improvement.” That has always been my own opinion.

You have not forgotten—have you?—that I am to get you a catalogue of dwarf alpine plants suitable for your roof-garden. I have ordered it, and it will follow in a few days.

Meanwhile, my dear madam, I remain with warmest regards,

Yours obediently,

BERNARD F. TARLAND

LE PRÉ AUX MÉLÈZES, GENEVA,

*March 23, 1930*

MY DEAR MADAM,

The catalogue has arrived and I am sending it to you herewith. Unfortunately it does not tell us much about the blue aubretia you admired here in Geneva on the grey stone walls. It thrives in any crevice or crack, and in its very first spring grows into a thick, hanging cushion. With yellow and



white saxifrage there is nothing more suited for covering stone surfaces. There will not be many crannies in your roof-garden, and you may have no handy place to plant it, so I have taken the liberty of sending you by air-mail to-day a few of those rough, coarse-grained Dutch urns which you liked here in our garden. Aubretia does excellently in them and soon pours over the rim in all directions. Any gardener will be able to supply the smaller plants. While you are settling into your new home the urns will fill up and by the time you have leisure to visit it your roof-garden will look quite habitable.

Unfortunately I cannot find another excuse for writing to you—my most earnest reflection has failed to provide one. To-day Lady Constance Endicott is coming to pay me a last visit in my retreat before she leaves Geneva. As she has the good fortune to be a friend of yours I hope she will talk to me about you.

With warmest regards,

Yours,

BERNARD F. TARLAND

LE PRÉ AUX MÉLÈZES, GENEVA,

*March 27, 1930*

MY DEAR MADAM,

The excuse for which I prayed to heaven has quickly presented itself, though under rather dramatic circumstances. I am writing to you on behalf of Lady Constance, who is anxious lest you should have been troubled by the unseemly publicity given by the newspapers to our little boating accident. For this publicity we have to thank in the first place the Japanese and Hungarian delegates to the League of Nations, both of whom were in the boat. Their presence, of course, made the affair interesting to the newspapers; in itself nothing, or very little. Lady Constance and I were sitting over a cosy

cup of tea when we were pounced upon by her son. The weather was exceptionally fine for the time of year, and he had decided to try his new sailing yacht and take his mother home across the lake. I went with them and we had an excellent time, till one of those new inventions of the devil, an English speedboat, which young Mellish of the Consulate has recently bought, played one of its puckish tricks on its new steersman, got out of control, and struck the yacht a violent glancing blow on the side. Tom Endicott and the Japanese delegate were thrown overboard and had to be fished out; Lady Constance had a shock and the yacht began to leak. The worst of it was that at this time of year there are practically no boats on the lake, but by good luck a patrol-boat spied us and towed us in. We were maliciously pleased, of course, for one always is when the League of Nations people cut a bad figure. That was all. Lady Constance is still confined to her room, but has sent me a characteristic letter, written in pencil, in which she gives me a welcome injunction to inform you of what has happened. She was just telling me some charming things about you and your first meeting at the International Feminist Congress in Rome in 1914. I was very much vexed with young Mellish for the unexpected interruption.

Ever yours,

BERNARD F. TARLAND

SAVOY HOTEL, LONDON,

*April 1, 1930*

DEAR LADY,

Chance is a powerful deity. I should have left without even a presentiment of the biggest thing that could happen to me these days—the arrival of your letter. I should have left, had not a trivial circumstance, the fact that the garden gate was locked, delayed the car for the five minutes which

enabled me to take my letters from the postman. I could never understand how the workings of chance can be dismissed as of no importance.

Your letter is here. You say the picture and the urns have reached you, and you thank me in the friendly tone one uses towards a nice old man who has once asked one to tea. And I have existed all the way to London only on the pleasure your letter has given me.

I travelled with the Endicotts, and while Constance was finishing her story of your meeting in Rome I was sitting in my corner, looking at your letter over and over again, with an indescribable feeling of happiness. How wonderful is a letter for which one has searched the post-box every day! How disturbing the sight of the envelope at last, creased and postmarked, suddenly the most precious thing one has, for the loss of which there could be no compensation! I came here in response to a telegram from a niece, whose twelve-year-old son has suffered for years with his eyes and seemed on the point of going blind. It looked very serious, but to-day there is some hope. I shall leave again at the end of the week for Geneva and take the boy with me. Meanwhile, we are making little excursions together to get him used to his old uncle. The ice was finally broken at the Zoo, where we made friends with a young puma. I brought it back from India myself a short time ago and it has grown into a very beautiful young animal.

I should like to thank you for the great happiness your letter has given me.

BERNARD F. TARLAND

TELEGRAM FROM BERLIN

*April 6,*

To Tarland—Pré aux Mélèzes—Geneva.

How are you and your invalid?

MONICA VELMEDE

LE PRÉ AUX MÉLÈZES, GENEVA,

*April 7, 1930*

DEAR LADY,

Your inquiry falls like dew from heaven into the early morning of an unspeakably beautiful day. How should I, how could I, send you a report of the anxious days we have passed through here without your express authority to do so? I confess that my belief in miracles was strong enough to nourish the daily hope within me that you would give it. And now you have come to me with a thought, a question. I can see that these last few days have made me need a little comfort, and your question was the comfort I needed.

Guy—that is the boy's name—has been very ill. I must go back a good way to make things clear to you. He is the posthumous child of my poor nephew who was killed in France in the last month of the war, a few days before the Armistice. The madness of such things! He was one of the youngest staff officers, very talented, very sensitive, one of those Englishmen who had long since realized that the myths and legends which served in every country to spur the fighters on to destroy the enemy did not tell the truth about the causes of the war. A short time previously he had sent me word through a friend, who was on leave, of his doubts of the official explanations, and of the uneasiness these doubts had caused him. Then he was killed. His young widow was a very ambitious woman who had cherished high hopes of a brilliant career for her husband; these stricken hopes and ambitions she now transferred to her little son. He was to achieve all that had been denied to his father and therefore to her. First we heard that he had been awarded a scholarship at one of the best preparatory schools; then, a few weeks ago, he was one of three candidates out of a hundred and eighty who secured the valuable and difficult prize of a scholarship to Winchester. Then his eyes, which for years had been growing more and more short-sighted, completely failed him. They thought he had gone blind. He was suffering from chronic overwork and

his nerves were so weakened that the doctors could promise to save his sight on the one condition that he gave up studying. The worst of it for him was the lack of self-control with which his mother faced up to this blow. She had fallen from the summit of her ambition, and, disregarding the boy's presence, complained passionately that their hopes and prospects for the future were utterly destroyed.

I'm afraid I treated her very harshly. I treated her extremely harshly, dearest friend. Forgive that phrase! It came of itself, but it looks so attractive! Yes, dearest friend, I behaved like a heartless old bear, and told her—not quite so bluntly, I admit, but quite plainly enough—to hold her tongue. You see, the boy was lying on the divan listening, with a bandage over his eyes. I told her he was going to spend the whole summer with me in Geneva and that afterwards we would see. I happen to be his guardian and that simplified matters. After that I wasted no time in bringing the boy here with me. It was probably rather foolish of me. For scarcely had we got here when he went down with a severe attack of influenza and I was terrified, I confess. But the quiet here by the lake, the superb air, a sensible doctor and a complete absence of hysterical women, who have cast a shadow over his life (who knows what an uncommunicative boy carries about in his head?)—all these factors together have had their effect and to-day he is out of danger. Weak, of course, and apparently almost dumb—but that will pass.

Now that the worst is over and your heartening telegram has come, I am feeling extraordinarily cheerful at the prospect of having a sick child in the house. A sick child—I am sure you will understand what I mean—awakens in me all the instincts of a grandfather, of the head of a house, and offers a welcome occasion for the release of slumbering powers. I know exactly what we all have to do; there are all sorts of necessary and amusing things that can be taken in hand at once without anyone interfering in my arrangements. My niece has gone to her mother in Scotland to be

comforted and there is no reason to fear interference from that quarter.

But I must stop, for this letter is already too long. What reasonably valid excuse could I find or invent to make you realize how gladly I would go on writing. No, there is nothing more to say. Your telegram has been answered. The patient is improving. And as for me—I fear that my share of your kind inquiry has been used up to the last bit, and that I have heavily overdrawn my credit in the bank of your sympathy—on which I have been living since that blissful moment early this morning when your telegram arrived.

Ever yours,  
B. T.

RAILWAY STATION, HANOVER,  
*Night, April 11, 1930*

DEAR MR. TARLAND,

If the credit balance of sympathy of which you speak were really exhausted, I should, after your letter telling me about the poor little boy, certainly open a new credit in your favour—an unlimited one. But the books, which I am meanwhile dispatching to you, as you expressed a wish for them, still constitute a draft on that original balance, namely the extraordinary conviction which seized upon me “at first sight,” and deepened with every moment of that beautiful, stirring, unforgettable afternoon at Le Pré aux Mèlèzes, that, in all simplicity, a friendship had been bestowed upon me. You will understand that a credit balance of sympathy based on such a feeling must necessarily prove inexhaustible.

The address at the head of this letter will reveal to you the fact that I took your letter away with me on my travels. I can only add that, in this interval between two trains, in the unspeakable weariness and desolation of a waiting-room between three and four in the morning, it is a real comfort to me.

I am on a lecture tour which will occupy me till just before

Easter, and I can only snatch a moment for writing at unconventional hours such as this. But I need hardly say that letters will be forwarded to me. On a journey such as this, there will be many an hour when a word of greeting, recalling our meeting that afternoon, would be a solace. And therefore let me, too, plead for a little "credit" on my own account. Tell me more about yourself and the boy. What a happy time he must be having in your care! I envy him with all my heart.

The aubretias were actually planted before I went away.

Yours gratefully,

MONICA VELMEDE

LE PRÉ AUX MÉLÈZES, GENEVA,

*Monday, April 14, 1930*

DEAR LADY,

We have spent the whole week behind curtains of infinitely soft and noiseless spring rain, through which the increasingly victorious sun has shone with a remote and magical enchantment. To-day the clouds parted above the sodden meadows and all the bays of the swollen lake, and there on the big oak table in the hall was your letter and the parcel of books from your publisher. A bright shaft of light fell across the dark hall, all the gutters on the roof were trickling and dripping, a bird called from a tree-top with a note of triumph indescribably sweet. I'm fully convinced that one lives for years in a state of inner tension waiting for the deep fulfilment which such a moment brings, when, of a sudden, the fruit of all one's striving, ripe, cut, gathered and garnered, lies at one's feet. "A day of grace is like a day of harvest."

That was three hours ago. I have been looking into your books, all three at once—yes, all three lay open on my knees while I scanned the pages, the indescribably alluring, unknown pages, turning them, glancing through them, inquiring of them again and again, without being able, for very eagerness, to hearken to what they said, hardly knowing what I was

looking for in my overmastering desire to know everything. I want to find out all these three books can tell me about you. It will take me days to find my way out of this embarrassment of riches, this sudden abundance of precious opportunities of thinking of you and learning of you.

But your letter is the most important thing you have sent me. I hold fast to these little pages, scarcely larger than my hand, torn by you from a writing-block and written by you in the station waiting-room at Hanover between 3 and 4 in the morning. These little pages, you see, have changed everything for me. Now for the first time you have really answered me. This was not an amiable response to a trivial attention, the sort of letter that may pass a thousand times between acquaintances who enjoy recalling an hour they have spent together; no, here you have said a few simple words to one of whom you know nothing but that he thinks of you night and day, a few words which came to him as an act of mercy in the deep unrest and wonderful distress in which he has found himself since you were here. Now you know all that cannot be explained; all the excuses have been made and there is no more to hide. You tell me you cannot write, you say you will scarcely be able to snatch an occasional hour of recreation from the work you will now be engaged on; but you add that you read my letters and I may write to you, indeed that I *am to* write to you.

How does a man behave when an incredible happiness slowly dawns upon him? What can he do to make room inside him for that overwhelming experience? His daily life goes on around him and yet the whole world has changed; he goes on acting his part in the stale old play while the actors gabble unhesitatingly around him, cues are given and taken up, dialogue tossed like a ball from lip to lip, and his own self, still in the costume familiar to the rest, spreads out in secret its astounding treasures.

The hall was full of people. The doctor had been to see Guy and was trying to get out; the gardener was trying to



get in, and behind him was the chauffeur wanting to tell me of the new car he had been testing and to get me to look at it. It is a small car, and I hope it will be really useful to the boy, for whom I now feel responsible, in the course of his convalescence. My cousin Bella was arriving as usual quite unannounced and her monumental wardrobe-trunks nearly filled the hall; three members of her retinue were standing round, and outside I could hear the footsteps of the men who were about to transport this extravagant luggage into the interior of the house. It was a moment that would have filled my old aunt Prudence—who left me this house as a sort of revenge—with malicious joy. She always believed that the responsibilities of a large household and the exactions of tedious relatives would have a salutary effect on my—in her opinion—grossly egocentric nature. I shall tell you more of this on a later occasion. But the strong desire to be alone with your letter and your books at the earliest possible moment proved irresistible. In five minutes I had taken leave of the doctor, dismissed the gardener, soothed the chauffeur and sent the rest about their appropriate business. I was free and took your letter and the books, like a recovered treasure, to the little reading-room in the clock tower, locking the door behind me.

Now it is evening. From this room one can see far across the land over the lake and the common behind the house. Guy and Mathieu, the gardener, are coming home through the damp grass; they have fed the stock and locked up the sheds for the night. The boy is walking quite vigorously again, talking to the old man. I must put away my precious books, stow your little pages in my wallet, and take my place at the family table as master of the house. Afterwards I shall come up here again and write to you—all through the night.

*The same night*

It seems to me, dear friend, that since you entered this house my life has been nothing more than one long, unin-

terraptured communion with you. You knew—you must have known—that I felt an almost irresistible urge to write to you as soon as I entered the yellow room that is so full of your presence. I spent my whole day trying to escape from that secret desire. Whenever anything happened to me I was assaulted by this seductive temptation. Vistas into the forbidden paradise opened on every side. I was as restless as a man with a guilty conscience, for what had come over me that I should want to write to you as an old friend, to tell you of every trifling thing that happened? I earnestly examined myself—but the desire was so urgent that I was seeking some means of satisfying it without having to acknowledge it to you, though your eyes must have seen through me.

I fetched down an old chest from the lumber-room. It has a lock and key and a slit in the lid. I considered writing to you daily the letter that cried out to be written, and locking them all up in that chest. It was my foolish hope that one day—later on!—you would come back to Geneva and stay in my house, for you remember—don't you?—that our mutual friend expressed the desire to spend a few days with you here in my quiet house at the next session of the League of Nations. Then, I hoped, you would read my letters. Of course, it was quite fantastic. I realized it when the old chest was actually there on my writing-desk. The thought of burying my letters alive in it made me feel most depressed. But I was not ashamed of my boyish fancies, far from it! They were a proof that the heavenly guest who had never visited me in all my life had come at last. All spoke of his doings but I did not know him; I could only listen when others talked. And I believe there are more of us like that than is commonly thought. Men and women who grow steadily and strongly, like a tree that forms ring after ring, wrapping them about its inmost self, where the life and sap flow, never listening to its pulse, never finding time for personal experience. Men and women, robustly brought up, who have

never handled themselves too gently, who are by habit industrious and make but small demands for themselves. Their demands are small because they are insatiable on a truly cosmic scale; their instinct tells them that it is humanly very improbable that they will be truly satisfied in any matter and at any time in this life. Therefore they do not even set out to look for satisfaction. All their lives they remain inwardly indifferent to what comes to them. But then—it happens to them as it has happened to me; they begin to perceive faint stirrings—then they love. For from the very beginning love was the goal of their life's journey, the far, the farthest goal, to which all things moved. But the way became circuitous and confused; there was so much to be done, so much to be cleared away; they had to clear away everything that lay about, tangled, crude, intractable, on the path to their distant goal. Their being was like a bow bent to its quivering limit and aimed in a lofty sweep above all things else to the goal—but the trajectory was so cosmically vast and shone with such universal lights and colours that it seemed to lack common reality and they did not pursue it. One does not set out to find the spot where the rainbow sets its foot on earth.

Love! There is a wise saying of old Anatole France, who was certainly not among those who for very insatiability neglect to pursue satisfaction, and yet at the end had a great illumination: "Love should be reserved for old age. If I were God, I should have put love at the end of human life and not at the beginning. God thought of this Himself for a moment. Indeed, He arranged it so with certain insects, which love in the hour of their death. But then He changed His plan, which was a mistake. If I had had the ordering of it, I should have put all labour and effort into the time when man is going through the caterpillar stage. Then he needs for growth and development unremitting activity. But later, in old age, he would burst his chrysalis and become free, and learn to devote delightful hours wholly to love. Wise, he would then know

how to love; experienced, he would be able to distinguish what was most valuable. This would be his reward, the crown of his laborious existence, of the mysterious and inexplicable path of a human being on this earth."

I could not live alone with what had happened to me, and I was not allowed to come to you. You do not know what an effort it cost to restrain my first letter, which came to you with the picture of pomegranate blossom, and keep it properly short and casual. It wanted to go on for ever. When I had the sudden inspiration to send you that picture, I was overcome by such a fierce joy that I could scarcely breathe, a young, irrational happiness so intense that I left everything where it was and ran to the cupboard where the old engravings were kept. I snatched out the portfolio and found the picture—I had in my possession something you had liked, something you had called beautiful. What a treasure! I could not take my eyes from it. I still saw the movement of your finger as it followed the delicate curve of a petal, quickly, lightly, and full of tenderness. I packed it up at once and sent it off. And then a long day moved with infinite slowness towards its close—for I had determined not to write to you again until the evening! There seemed to be nothing in my house but the things you had noticed. All else was erased; I had ceased to see it. I walked round the outside to rediscover the form of the house itself, for its architecture had pleased you, the bright stonework against the dark clump of trees, the patriarchal and yet cultivated elegance of these old country houses round Geneva which had appealed to you. I stood in the big yellow tea-room, where you remarked on the width and blueness of the view across the lake and the mountains. When one enters it, it always seems to make one draw a breath of relief. You felt that. The colours of the books along the shelves pleased you—you found the groupings of blue and yellow, red and green, "refreshing as beds of tulips," although you did not know that it is one of the many useless whims of the owner to take the volumes out of their catalogue order and

produce contrasts with the different coloured bindings to enliven the appearance of the room. A foolish way of arranging a library, I know—but it pleased you. You took note of the desk and saw that it had a wider top and deeper drawers than usual, that it had an extra foot in all its dimensions—just what one always wanted and never found in a desk, you said. And you added that it looked too tidy for real work. I'll bet you thought to yourself with a smile: "Here's a leisurely old gentleman with nothing to do, and his desk is about on a level with his divan, both places of repose, one for the body and one for the mind." You were quite amused—weren't you?—as a person accustomed to intense mental effort, at this holiday desk of mine? And I confess I do not work there. Unfortunately I could not show you the holes and corners where I do work. I wanted to show you everything. Some day I must.

But you passed on, you took in your hands things which belonged to me, you stopped before my most treasured possessions, the head of St. Anne, the van Gogh sunflowers in the blue corner. You took up books that were lying around, and once—you've forgotten it by now—for an instant, you looked round for me. It was a second of quite fleeting attention in the midst of our talk, perhaps you were infected by the growing tension, controlled with difficulty, that walked in my person at your side, the intensification of all sensory processes that is so hard to dissemble. For an instant our eyes met, then yours moved on, calm, wise, collected, the eyes of a woman who lives her own life, deriving her strength from her own deep resources. I know that at that moment a kind of fear took hold of me, a terror of some unsuspected need, of unknown distresses and anxieties, of the assault of a force against which I had no defence, because my deepest self called out for it. Yes, it was now beyond my power to prevent the irruption of a new and incalculable power into my free, calm, delightful leisure—is not such leisure a gift of the gods?—like a tempest, dispersing to all quarters of the heavens the habitual,

familiar content of my daily life. It had come! Everything was new, embarrassingly young and heart-searching—and blissful.

All day, up here in my room, I have been holding your books in both hands with a grasp so firm as to be almost an embrace; they were no longer merely the inexhaustible treasures of the morning, they were more—the one thing I needed—the proof of your existence. “Now everything is all right!” That is how it felt, this new and still completely undiscovered thing inside me, the wonderful, deep and delicate bondage of the lover. Now I know it and shall begin to experience it. There can be nothing more important than this experiencing. Nothing shall be hastened, nothing passed over, it shall just be, this inexhaustible richness. This house with the hills behind has suddenly become strong and present, present to me because it bears your impress, the gently rising garden, the tall trees by the tower, where I am writing you all this, the beautiful dark night outside the windows. The lake respires unseen. You are far away, working and unconscious of me; perhaps since that nocturnal hour in the waiting-room at Hanover you have not brushed with a single thought the distant correspondent in Geneva. A hot joy, a shock I have never experienced before in its deathly and yet blissful intensity, overwhelms me as I think of the great distance, the great, dark, unknown distance that lies between us. The thought is strangely joyous, comforting and exciting! As though the distance is so great in order that it can be completely filled by you. A heart in its quest for the eternal goal, the never-ended, never-completed adventure! A heart that does not wish to arrive, that wishes only to be on its way towards the mystery! A heart to which all is revealed and made certain in the divine fullness of uncertainty! I seek you with my stillest and most reverent thoughts. I want to do to you what is good. All I have been, all I have experienced, is rounded off in a new and wonderful consciousness of living. And all this since you passed through my house, Monica

Velmede. I never knew that the heart can be so satisfied by its own deepest perceptions, that it wants and needs to be alone when overwhelmed by the full sweetness and flavour of what has come to it. I have a whole lifetime behind me and yet I never knew that.

To-night, as it grew darker and quieter outside and the world went to sleep, that lifetime passed in review before me; I saw the man I used to be, who thought all his wants fulfilled because each day's work was measured out for him every morning, new and full and sufficient. What a relief for the wanderer, the man who can nowhere make his home, to be bound by a day's work, to be entrusted with a task! How much he owes for this to his fellow-men, the world around him, how much to life that harnesses his willing power, gives him, who does not wish to choose, no choice, decides on his behalf where he shall put his hand to the plough and do his part. How good it is for him when somewhere, somehow, a duty is laid upon him. Such tasks have often been laid upon me by others, even by other nations, and I shall never cease to thank my fate that so it was. But now I have finished the old tasks; the patient dredger has stopped work; it has brought up load after load—honest, commonplace work, useful in its way—and done for others what others must now do for themselves—cleared the way. And to-night how sweet my holiday seemed! What a swinging and peeling was in my mind! Through the magic stillness I fancied I heard music. I look inside myself—how awake it all is! Young, turbulent, undreamed-of happinesses gush through my heart. Where will this wondrous journey lead me, starting alone here from my room in the tower, with your letters, your books? What will be the end of this restlessness? The faintest shimmer of day lies on the Salève. I will get old Selim from the stable and ride into the sleeping hills till sunrise. The steaming horse and the misty hills, the scent of earth and grass, how good it will be! I can only ride, and think of you!

BEN TARLAND

BERLIN,

*Easter Sunday, April 20, 1930*

DEAR NEW FRIEND, DEAR YOUTHFUL FRIEND,

I was so utterly overwhelmed by your letter that I simply sat still for a time—I am ashamed to say how long—pen in hand, with a blank sheet of paper before me—partly because it was such a joy to listen to the flow of your words—just that and nothing else—partly because my own heart is like a cup filled to the brim. I hardly know how to begin, how to pour out my heart in words, for words are but single drops. Let me empty the whole cup at once. Your letter about our meeting, about your ride through the morning mist, has made me simply indescribably happy. Happiness comes to one sometimes in a wished-for, familiar, anticipated form. But this bestowal of your friendship is different. It is so utterly out of the ordinary run of things. How splendid, how brave it was of you, nonetheless, to offer it to me so frankly!

I know to which moment you allude in your letter. All the time while you were showing me your home, your pictures, your books, your writing-table, I could not help watching you as well. And the thing that specially appealed to me and pleased me was not so much the spaciousness and fullness of your life, which unfolded itself to my gaze—the atmosphere of distant lands and of the great world that hovered around you, the wide range of your experience and the impressions with which your mind was stored—though that was all very delightful. But, do you know what it was that charmed me most? May I tell you? It was the boy in you, your ardour, your directness, your ingenuousness. That these qualities could survive after a life which had embraced and absorbed so much; that they owed their survival perhaps to all that you had gone through: great and beautiful experiences, possibly very painful ones as well, which may have served to strengthen that crystalline, natural simplicity or to revive it in a new form—it was this that interested and charmed me so greatly. You radiated the cool freshness of just such a dewy morning as



that on which you went riding. Nature herself is ever young and new. It was in that moment—surely the one to which you allude. I had just put that fine copy of Marcus Aurelius back on its shelf—that I very nearly . . . that I was on the point of stretching out my hand to you, stirred to the depths by a sudden sense of contact. It must have been on some plane where one's own will plays no part, that our two lives were drawn towards each other. And now you have made that gesture, for which I lacked the courage at that moment. How can one be so pusillanimous when inwardly one is so sure of a thing? But now, with all the emotion of that imperishable moment, I place my hand in yours. My thanks to you for enabling me to do so.

Yours,

MONICA VELMEDE

LE PRÉ AUX MÉLÈZES, GENEVA,

*Thursday, April 24, 1930*

I am sitting with your letter, dear friend, in the hot morning sun (wonderfully hot for April). In front of me is a lavender hedge, vibrating in the hot air and exhaling an intoxicating scent. Lost in thought, immersed in your letter, I have put my hand many times into this hedge, rubbed the little dry blossoms between my fingers and scattered the petals. I shall never smell the hot scent of lavender again without thinking of this morning. Is it possible to be so happy? I have tried to stand up firmly with squared shoulders against the breakers of this inward happiness—and yet it has nearly overwhelmed me. Yours is not a letter, it is your voice, your own voice, certain cadences you use, which I had forgotten—forgotten!—only to recognize them afresh with a breathless suspense, a deep, incomparable joy. My joyous thoughts run away with my heart as a team in the arena runs away with its driver, who stands in his lurching chariot with no thought but to keep his balance and his hold on the reins. I have not yet

got my thoughts under control again. I am still in the jubilant rush of the race. I am driving to you, to the unimaginable happiness of reaching the only place that can be my home, the place where I shall unharness and stable the horses. I have so much to tell you, I do not know where to begin, and yet I have a firm, wonderful certainty that you know it all already.

First I must tell you this: There is one hour in my life which exceeds in significance every other; it is the hour you spent with me from the time you entered the yellow tea-room that afternoon to the moment when, with faint fatigue in your eyes, you took leave of me with a nod from the corner of your friend's car. Perhaps that look of fatigue was a fancy bred of my jealous but brotherly wish to keep you here in the quiet of my deep armchair, to watch over your rest after the long day's work you had completed and before you embarked on a journey that would take you a day and a night. Yes, that hour was the most important of all the hours in my life, and I am in my sixtieth year. I might be your father—that is a strange thought!—a young father admittedly, but one who would have been interested the more warmly and intensely in the growth of his wise little daughter! I think I must be quite twenty-five years older than you, and yet nothing in your letter brought me a deeper or more poignant happiness than your words about the boy in me. That was the last spade-stroke which opened the gushing mouth of the spring! How shall I tell you of it? There is so much to explain, and I am suffering from one of those periodical plagues laid upon me by the will of old Aunt Prudence. My cousin Bella has invaded the house with a retinue of ministering spirits and is getting ready for her conference, which is to provide further ventilation for the problem of which of the universal languages, Esperanto, Ido, Occidental, Avulo, Medial, Universal, etc., each with its ardent propagandists, is to be recommended for acceptance by the League of Nations. We are expecting experts from England, Germany,

France, Scandinavia, India and Holland; the whole house is clattering with typewriters and buzzing with telephone calls. I feel towards these matters that mixture of respect and impatience which so many of the subjects that float in the current of the League's activities inspire in the observer. This time my impatience is all the greater, for not even the last trump would have dragged me away from this room in the tower, from your books and my thoughts of you. But cousin Bella's retainers manage it. They are not so easily ignored.

Moreover, I cannot escape from these turbulent distractions as young Guy does, to the garage or to Mathieu, the gardener. He is not allowed to touch a book, and is learning here from the bottom the work of washing, cleaning and lubricating a car; he looks attractively shabby, happy and boyish in his blue overalls. I enjoy watching him. It was he who brought me your first sympathetic inquiry, the first translation of your thoughts into action. I have acquired a certain skill in surviving these periodical invasions by my relatives. The odd thing is that they compel me to play a part that really suits me. I never realized before that people and their obsessions really amuse me; I am often attracted now by the fervour and energy with which people propagate, defend and maintain their favourite notions. As a person who in the innermost depths of his nature is purely receptive, purely a spectator, a consumer, and enjoys being such without wishing to act or change external conditions, I find the active energy of others inexhaustibly fascinating and worthy of respect. I think it is the magic of this mysterious power in living beings that led me to study and observe those problematical creatures, communal insects. I believe I have come to like human beings by way of the formicides. And Aunt Prudence, to whom I owe my present outward circumstances, probably foresaw with her sharp, old woman's shrewdness this precise development. It is only a few years since I inherited this delightful place. After her death it came out that she had left

me (in place of her niece and heiress, my late wife) her house in Geneva and her whole fortune with the comment: "To my nephew, who has always wandered about the world absorbed in the ways of insects, that he may learn to stay at home and look after his fellow-men." Her will is a curiosity. I must show it you some time. It provides that a certain part of the income she left me is to be applied every year to entertaining the numerous members of an extensive family; they have to be invited here at specified times, of which the persons concerned were carefully informed. And so, as the year revolves, a gentle stream of cousins and their younger progeny flows through this house. But the place is so large that their visits proved less of a burden than I had at first expected. Indeed, I have learned to wring a certain enjoyment out of them. The programme was made quite intelligently: the old people come in the autumn, winter and early spring, the younger members of the family in high spring and summer. It is quite bearable. Now that I have the boy here from England, I am promising myself a more than usually entertaining summer, for Semmele is coming from Neckarsteinach to spend her long vacation. I will tell you about Semmele another time. For five years, since she first came to the house at the age of seven, she has been my little private path into the heart of Germany, always accessible, always refreshing and stimulating—and it is not always easy to gain access to that strange land.

When, with a certain grim humour, my aunt laid down this plan for me, she imposed on me a form of living! I now play a part that fits me year by year more comfortably, like an old, well-worn coat. The house, garden and surroundings offer so much natural scope to my guests that with a good conscience I have been able to fortify my own little domain like an inaccessible, unassailable fortress. A solitary old man, living among his books and hobbies, can easily foster the reputation of a kindly domestic tyrant and build up a protective legend of benevolent oddity. It amuses me to play the part; people expect it of me and it can be developed in so many

directions. Relatives are conveniently blind as a rule; they do not see what is there, and assume that what they do not see does not exist. They rarely find out how we see ourselves or how those see us whom we freely choose on our way through life. Providence arranged all that very sensibly and with a real instinct for sparing the individual. I lived very contentedly in my humming beehive. Growing old seemed to me rather wonderful—a process of increasing well-being, a growth into an outward form that gave the inner man more elbow room, greater scope, more strength. It was like spring-cleaning, a study and clarification of a life's impressions, of all one had collected in long, long years of wandering about the world. I had always been a traveller, rich of eye and poor of hand. Now there was something for my hands to do, I could put down all I had acquired in its right place and keep it there. It was like preparing for a vacation. Since I returned from my last trip to India with my son, which was the end of my serious scientific work, and after seeing through the press the last volume of my book on the communal organization of the formicides, the bees and wasps, my life has been outwardly inactive. I spent at home here, without interruption, those feverish post-War years when people snatched at work in the League of Nations and the International Labour Office as an opiate, trying to escape from the urgent warnings of conscience, which spoke more and more clearly of fatal omissions and intolerable errors in international settlements.

I listened and looked on, while men and women of all tendencies and from every country came here and confided to me their anxieties, their hopes and their enmities. The voice of reality was drowned more and more completely by the roar of the huge machine through which it strove to make itself heard. A comedy was being nicely played on this peculiar stage by the lakeside, where so many thoughts had been thought which were to affect the development of Europe. And the purpose of the comedy was to make one forget that the real drama, for which the impressive scenery had been

set, would be played elsewhere. The producers and actors for that drama were not yet available. It was above the heads of the old stock company. Your first words on that tragic situation were a revelation to me! I felt with an inward start of attention your clear, disciplined insight, when you told me what these years of bitter comedy had cost your country and therewith the rest of the world. I wanted you to tell me so much about these things, their growth and inevitable results. And that afternoon, while my mind was thus occupied, I was watching with profound delight, as your small, deft hands took out and opened my books; I was looking at the delicate curve of your eyebrows and the line of your dark hair. I took it all in. And, oh, it was the boy in me who was overwhelmed by a hot and blissful confusion, a remote, adoring respect, an unaccountable longing, and a mute question—the eternal question! My heart was aflame. I am still celebrating the festival of that hour. To-morrow, when the French and German experts on the universal-language committee have left us, I must write to you again—may I?—write until the sun rises. And may I say that I am holding your hand at this moment, that I know every line in it, and that I do not yet dare to kiss it even in thought?

B. TARLAND

LE PRÉ AUX MÉLÈZES, GENEVA,  
*Evening, April 25, 1930*

How long I have lived, dear friend, I only realized this evening when I began to tell you of it. When To-day is so bright, so full of the pressing demand to be lived, one is always unjust to the shadowy Yesterday, the silent Past whose sun has set. Yet once it shone and warmed one. Hand in hand with you—I have put your hand to my lips repeatedly this evening, in silence and deep reverence—I have wandered through all my past life. Long voyages, like a fine, broad current, bore the earliest childhood's impressions, seen almost as in

a dream. Before I was five I had twice been to India and back with my parents. Water, a great ship, the brown faces of Indian servants, the smell of brown skins, the flashing smile of white teeth in dark faces that are always gentle towards children, the thin brown fingers of the *ayah* sleeping on her mat beside my cot, the singsong of coolies carrying coal, the sounds of ports and the strange colours and noises of busy bazaars—and over all this the sharp, clear outlines of the English world to which I belonged, the hard, weather-beaten face of my father, in whose presence life was so taut and speech so brief, and all seemed to be haste and departure, the flash of bare steel and the rich smell of leather and horses. He was not always there. He came up now and then to my mother and me in the hills, where the house lay bedded in gardens and greenery among other houses, peacefully surrounded by the hard brown plateau. He was the young commander of one of the most advanced military posts of the British Army in India, on the North-West Frontier, and he fell in one of the many nameless campaigns against the Afridis. He had found my mother in Germany, and on his death she returned with me to her native land. “The sick and sad,” she said, “are better looked after in Germany than anywhere else.” The Germany that spoke through her lips seemed to me to have always been, eternal and indestructible, a natural force, ever recurring, like blooming and fading, sowing and reaping, essentially more than a mere land like others. In short, a home.

My mother went back when she lost the love of her youth, the joy of her happy, brave heart, in that strange, foreign, far-away India. She went back to Germany and took me with her. It was the natural thing to do. I took root in two native lands, with every fibre of me, with that feeling which arises only from belonging without question, physically, without thought or conscious recognition. No man, say the wiseacres, can have two native lands, but they talk nonsense. And yet perhaps they are not quite wrong, though in my own experience

a man can have a motherland and a fatherland. Germany was the motherland to me; there is something in the very kernel of my being that belongs irrevocably to Germany, the land where my mother grew, a woman of the heart, with a warm, creative hand, a nature rich, fruitful and indestructibly whole. She could not remain sick and sad; new duties intruded into her orbit, demanding warmth and light. She entered into a second happy marriage, and I was a schoolboy in the brown cap of the Vitzthum Gymnasium at Dresden when my little half-sisters were born. They grew up in the happy, sheltered air of a home inimitably built up by her from a thousand little details, English and German, inextricably tangled. I was her big boy, her "Frieder," for her South German tongue had soon made this pet name out of my second name Frederick, which she preferred. We read together and tramped the countryside together. We went to the old German towns, the woods, the hills—and still when I see pictures of the Black Forest or Swabia, of German rivers and valleys, cathedrals and castles, still "Frieder" is somewhere, somehow, connected with them. Something remains in me of that deep, peaceful, warm, inward motherliness which embraces and sustains the child she bore as long as it breathes. The wealth of the child that grows up with two languages is inexhaustible, for the words, sounds and images of two races constantly mix in its mind, opening vistas into almost inexpressible human feelings, which are so differently perceived, expressed and retained by the two languages, yet with such close similarities. The child cannot express the feelings thus aroused, but it has a magic key which admits it to two worlds, perceptible to its instincts though beyond the survey of its immature mind. It is rich from birth. Every word in each of the two languages shapes it, nourishes it, pulses in its blood-stream; every word is intertwined with its vague, earliest sensations, goes back to its own beginning and far beyond into the remote past, of which the child knows nothing, though its notes still sound in its being. Every word and every turn of speech



is fresh, living and powerful, filled with individual vitality, sound to the very roots. English and German songs, rhymes and little precepts re-echoed through that nursery; the little German sisters and the big English brother drank from the same spring.

And yet I felt very early, and increasingly as time went on, that much would remain strange to me in the outward forms, in the behaviour of people one to the other, in the thousand and one shades and tones of the manifold intricacies of German life. I found that I tried instinctively to discover a different form for many things, a different expression, quite consciously, though without breaking with the familiar German conditions I understood. It became a habit with me to feel myself outside its firmly constructed frame, living in some ultimate inner freedom, and yet I did not look for the cause of this, but allowed it quietly to clarify within me. I did not always like the conditions of life in Germany outside the warm domestic circle, formed and controlled by my mother. Yet I had a sympathy with them. They made me respect them, even when they seemed a little clumsy and over-elaborate. There was only one sphere where the creative genius of the German race rose with a single mighty sweep of its wings to unrestricted sovereignty, that was the sphere of music. Here was undisputed mastery, before which I capitulated. I remember from earliest childhood the wonder, the never-ending amazement, which took possession of me when, with the first accord of the instruments, this world began to rise, to grow, to take shape in its vast dimensions, and the German mind unfolded itself, ruling, searching, clarifying, disciplining itself, creative in the purest sense. The ultimate and the highest, the greatest and the noblest, are here expressed with unparalleled sureness and freedom, with a skill which seems to move about the Creator's workshop, selecting from all the elements that form, move and sustain the cosmos and the mind of man.

I grow impatient when people mention so casually the names

of the great German musicians; I most seriously believe that we do not yet appreciate what it is that approaches us, in a form the human mind can understand, when these creators speak: Mozart, Bach, Beethoven, Schubert, Brahms, to name only the greatest. Sometimes I repeat their names to myself in a whisper; each one creates a world in outline; we probably do not know how much of the great spiritual inheritance, from which we contemporary Europeans still unconsciously live, is formed of these mighty building-stones. The thought that we shall talk of music and some day hear it together is so immeasurably attractive that I dare not say more of it. Otherwise, I should have to set off first thing to-morrow morning to you, and to Berlin, where there is always something to be heard.

But we must finish the story of that remote schoolboy in his brown cap. The humanistic Gymnasium could not divert him from his inborn passion—the observation and study, pursued in the most childish way and with the most primitive means, of that mysterious, rudimentary and almost invisible life, which passes almost unnoticed though it surrounds us on all sides and though, once we give it our attention, it overthrows the foundations of our thought and all our accepted ideas. I wanted to know all there was to be known about the most common and familiar insects, the various kinds of wasps and wild bees, gnats, flies, beetles and caterpillars. That was a life's work, little as I realized it at the time. All I felt was that something entirely different, the mystery of life itself, came tangibly near in this branch of science. "The insect does not belong to our world," Maeterlinck says truly. Nothing else that lives on earth, not even the plants, seems completely strange to us, however dumb its existence and infinite its secrets. All else belongs to the "brothers in bush and tree," to the sequence of living things in a tangible world. But the insect seems not to conform to the habits of our planet. One is almost tempted to assume that it comes from another world, a world more monstrous, more violent, apparently

more senseless, madder and more terrible than ours. Held and analysed in all their parts by the microscope, in spite of their incredible minuteness, these creatures reveal in form and function phantoms which seem to be the abortions of a devilish imagination; and again an incredible perfection of achievement, such as, for instance, the craftsmanship of the tiny insect which cuts out discs and ellipses with mathematical precision from the petals of flowers and uses them to line the honey vessels in which it lays its eggs. On what plan, what theory of measurement, what model is this infallible geometry founded? The insect builds its cells underground in complete darkness, how, therefore, can it know what circles and ellipses to cut out of the petals it chooses for the lining of these vessels? And yet the sections it cuts fit with the strictest accuracy into the openings of the cells, though they vary in size.

Such divinely inexplicable problems—or devilishly, who knows?—seized hold of my imagination, dearest friend, as soon as I began to reflect on such matters, and have never since loosened their grip. A boy's instinct to investigate these things produces a most unpleasant confusion in his study, and is inevitably accompanied by sticky and revolting messes. At home I was treated with patience but not much encouragement. Indeed, I was not encouraged till I went as a boy of fourteen to stay at the country house of my Quaker uncle and guardian in Devonshire, a holiday paradise in the south of England. After that I went every summer. I had there a little girl cousin, a real tomboy, lean and agile, and quick as a pointer on the scent; she became an incomparable companion. My uncle was benevolently disposed towards me, as a school-boy from Germany. He was himself a born observer of the indigenous plants and animals, as Englishmen so often are. I accepted with delight the exact methods of this nature study, which was practised none the less seriously because it was a hobby. My own clumsy efforts were guided and coordinated; books were there, a workshop where one could

sort, prepare and collect one's material; we undertook nocturnal expeditions after everything that creeps and flies, and I spent hours in the dark with my little companion, dressed in old breeches and a waterproof cape, and lying in wait for some creature that was shy of the day. She was more persevering and determined, and she worked harder than I. I had never known such a girl. Indeed, I knew hardly any girls of my own age; my little sisters in the nursery seemed to be of another species, charming little creatures to look after and play with. But here was a trustworthy partner, related to me, and one whom I soon recognized, with the unquestioning fairness of childhood, to be more capable than I; she had the same steady hands that could take hold of anything, the same grazed knees, the same restless legs which hated sitting still. It was she who found, invented or constructed all we needed for our expeditions: boxes and bags, dark lanterns and gum. She was never tired and never ill. If she got wet, she just got dry again; she could do without sleep or food as well as I, so long as we were on the track of some rare quarry. Patience—comrade, friend and confidante in all the phases of my early life, and they were the long and difficult phases, often tedious and exhausting, of a scientist's career. I have known the rarest form of fellowship in work, that of a marriage which was founded only—note that “only”!—on deep trust and mutual respect, acquired in the doing of things that seemed worth while to both of us, and on indestructible understanding. There are rare and precious women who know how to surround this foundation (the best foundation for the common life of man and woman) with a deep and tender feeling, bringing into such a union so much grace and goodness that the commonplace becomes a thing of beauty, and feelings, ever young and indestructible, are mutually exercised, whereby is realized the highest art of life. I myself contributed little or nothing to the quality of our marriage. I was the recipient of these gifts; I was completely absorbed in my work, often moody when things went wrong, with no steady poise, never

quite attaining to that firm, bright world in which my wife was at home as the heiress of centuries of Quaker culture. Round her name played the magic of the early dawn of that pure and courageous sect, whose women, with all their gentleness, were firm and tenacious, with all their mildness, clear and sharp-sighted, without false sentiment but full of kindness. Patience—the name has a special Quaker flavour, a breath of the disciplined yet humble simplicity of the first Quakers, which they upheld with relentless determination against an age that indulged in every form of indulgence and wanton worldliness. A flavour, patriarchal and yet cultivated, as of fine linen, fresh flowers and green grass. My debt to this woman, whose character gave our marriage its form, is immeasurable, and I guard my memories of her with veneration.

We married, quite as a matter of course, before I began work for my doctoral thesis on moor-ants. We had to go abroad at once to collect material, which would need months of careful research into the breeding and precise distribution of formicides on the moors of Esthonia, Scandinavia and Russia. We had to add all the new material we could to the meagre data at our disposal. Our honeymoon was spent in exploring the moors, in trudging through densely wooded swamps, often almost impassable, but a paradise for those obsessed by geo-botany and zoology, as we were. Like many English people, she knew a great deal of botany, and the faunist is often nearly helpless unless he is himself a botanist or works in close contact with one. We had to travel practically without luggage and yet take with us everything we needed. How incomparably inventive a woman can be in situations like that! More than once I should have been beaten without my wife, without her warm, happy temperament which survived all weathers and all accidents. She strode with me like a boy across the wettest moorlands and up the stoniest slopes, breathing and blooming in the increasing joy of search and discovery. Her feeling was even more brotherly

than sisterly. That type of woman is not rare in England; bodily activity and exertion are a joy and necessity to them, and their mental and spiritual life expresses itself strongly in that way. But there are depths beneath this outward activity, which are sometimes overlooked. It is a different way of reacting to strains which would turn inward with more contemplative natures, and modify the personality. Her nature was free from all that can be inhibitive, hysterical or in any way discordant. She was always herself, frank, active, alert. She had within her an inherited discipline which knew how to give to all things a helpful, soothing touch of humour. In this way she was always a stimulus and could face any situation, however serious, with cheery self-possession. There is great skill, there is art in such a way of living. She found an inexhaustible charm, which she was never tired of observing, in the full-toned colours of the moors, the green-brown of mosses and lichens, the scarlet of cranberries, rosemary and sorrel, and even now, when I look at her sketches, there arise before me with imperishable freshness those wedded journeyings, and I reflect on the miracle of comradeship. To-day, when man and woman are beginning to work together in so many fields, and some of us are coming to realize a little of the richness and fruitfulness of such relationships, it all seems more ordinary. And yet, perhaps, the experiment of a marriage based on a common "objective passion" has rarely succeeded so completely.

I wrote my thesis at Quetta in Baluchistan, near the Afghan frontier, the great garrison town of the British army in India. The military academy for young officers is there, in the high, healthy, mountain air, and many young couples meet at Quetta, for the course lasts two years and meanwhile they are certain not to be transferred. Thus Quetta has gradually developed into a place where young English wives have their first babies, and is called in the cheery jargon of the garrison the "army remount depot." There, in my wife's brother's house, our son was born. High above the sweltering

Indian plain, where a cool breath comes from the Himalayas, we passed the deadly Indian summer. The sky was unbelievably blue, and round us in the little friendly bungalows everything was new and fresh, and the people young and full of hope. Children thrive there. I have always been impressed by the simple robust way in which English babies are handled. Water, air, sun and plenty of sleep, these, combined with the simplest food, seem to me the secret of growth in those early years. I have never seen such healthy children as we saw up there. I never lost the feeling of being surrounded by blooming, healthy young life as I was working over my papers and specimens, the sense of the security of that human oasis, so near to the terrible rigidity of the rocky, mountainous masses where nothing could live. Scarcely an hour's walk from the little settlement round the military academy began that world of death. Immediately my work was completed, I had to make one more expedition into the mountains to look for several tiny parasites which live on a very rare species of lichen and thrive nowhere but on the almost inaccessible plateau above Quetta. But we decided first to take our son to England and leave him there with his grandparents. Patience wanted to leave the care of his earliest, still unconscious childhood to her mother and sister, in the guarded peace of her own home, so soon as he no longer had daily need of her. She wanted to share with me the second stage of my journeyings through the mountains, before I came home to take up work at Cambridge.

Dearest friend, I shall soon come to the end of my story—and to the end of my youth, the first years of manhood. What came after was long, long stretches of road, but I shall not tell you of them, there was nothing in them that needs to be told, nothing that was quite my own, quite personal. But I must offer you the end of my story, so that we can guard it together.

The next year, at the beginning of the cold weather, we returned to India. Life there is divided, with a certain monu-

mental simplicity which English people are apt to give it, into the cold and hot seasons and their corresponding and suitable modes of living. It was early autumn when we left our friends at Quetta and set off into the mountains. I had tested on previous journeys the bearers who accompanied our little expedition. Before we came to the utter solitude of the mountains, we had to pass through a narrow valley, in which just then one of those extraordinary events was taking place which occur periodically where primitive races are under English administration, and which need a Shakespeare, a modern imperial Shakespeare, to set them down in their fullness and richness and with all their subtle effects. The whole valley was like an armed camp, a scattered city of tents, which seemed already fully populated though further parties were arriving by all the hill-paths and through all the passes.

In the middle were large, open tents where the doctor-*sahib* and his assistants, together with a large number of women doctors, were hard at work. It was, in fact, the yearly gathering in the mountains of the Zenana Medical Mission. For weeks beforehand their messengers had been carrying the news to all the tribes in every valley and corner of the mountains—Afridis, Pathans, Afghans, Baluchis, Brahuis and so forth, some of them living in the bitterest enmity. For six weeks the chief medical officer and his staff, the chief woman doctor and her colleagues, were to attend the city of tents and give treatment and advice to all sufferers who consulted them there, and perform operations if such were necessary. Now the tribes were sending their sick, accompanied as usual by a numerous domestic and tribal retinue, with a train of camels and mule carts laden with provisions, for each had to be fed by his own people according to his caste. There was such confusion that I seriously doubt whether any but the English with their coolness and steadiness could have found their way through it, for the English look neither right nor left but straight ahead to the job in hand. At first we had



some difficulty in proceeding, for fever had broken out in the Brahui encampment, a special, treacherous kind of fever, which the doctor-*sahib* had been observing for some time with suspicion. We happened to know him well, and as we had supplies of quinine, disinfectants, and all the medicaments required for such expeditions in India, and had also been inoculated against typhus and enteric, he allowed us to go on. The noise, the heat, the turmoil of the road, were indescribable; our bearers had difficulty in protecting our drinking-cups and filters and our sacks of provisions from contamination by the whirling clouds of dust. All our stores were wrapped in tent-cloth and we made the utmost haste to get out of the crowds. Patience and I rode on ahead; next came our litter, a sort of stretcher fitted up like the local palanquins. I had insisted on bringing it so that my wife could sometimes lie at full length after clambering over the rocky ground. Six days' march brought us to the uplands which we wished to explore.

We spent about two weeks in the mountains. Our tent was pitched on a windy plateau, but in a sheltered position. The work went forward satisfactorily, but it was exhausting. We had to walk for hours before we could begin, and then we were scorched by the blazing sun which was very hot, despite the altitude, and was reflected with blinding brilliance from the bare, granite-hard rock. Patience suffered from pains in the head and eyes which had never troubled her before. The evening before we had planned to leave she was attacked by a violent fit of shivering. We passed an anxious night; my head bearer and I tried every remedy that might be of use, but towards morning she lost consciousness. We placed her in the litter; I hurriedly packed our valuable instruments, ordered the bearers to load the horses with our remaining luggage, and began the descent in the deathly stillness of dawn with my head bearer and the litter-carriers. For a day and a half we had to climb down a steep river-bed, dried up by the heat of the sun. The horses stumbled and had to be led, but the litter-carriers with their hard, bare feet were as sure-

footed as mules. Nothing affected the deep unconsciousness in which Patience lay. I cooled her hot, flushed forehead; her breath came in gasps, her hands lay strangely rigid. The silent, desperate descent of the gorge, made by our little hard-pressed group, the stony peace of the vast mountains around us, tore at my nerves; I have never since known such a feeling of impotent anxiety, the helplessness and desperation of a living being in the pitiless wilderness. Every now and then I lifted the curtains of the litter to look after my wife, moistened her lips and searched in vain for a sign of returning consciousness. Now and then I encountered the eye of my chief bearer. Some months before I had been struck by his intelligence and industry and had promoted him from a humble position in our household to be the chief of our servants. He was devoted to me. Each of us knew what the other was thinking. If my wife died, if it entered the minds of the bearers that they were carrying a dead or a dying woman, they would have set down the litter and fled in superstitious terror; they would have communicated their fear to the men behind who were following with the results of the expedition, and we should have been left alone in that uninhabited waste. There were panthers and jackals up there, and whoever had stayed behind to take care of the litter, while the other went on for help, could scarcely have survived until the rescue party reached him.

There was nothing for it but to go on and to hold our tongues. As the sun set I realized that Patience would not live through the night. She died towards morning without regaining consciousness. For three days, from Friday morning till Sunday evening, when we reached the city of tents at the foot of the mountains, the Indian and I went on tending her dead body, without being able to talk together, pretending to speak to her behind the curtains of the litter, imitating the faint murmur of her voice. Yes, we had to play a gruesome comedy to delude the unsuspecting bearers, to prevent their becoming suspicious; from time to time we had to call a

halt, the head bearer would light the spirit lamp—I can still see his immobile, brown face in the glow of the little blue flame—and prepare food for the patient. I discovered then that two men can be brothers though their skins be of a different colour. At last her body was lying upon a bed. The torment, the gnawing anxiety, were over, there was nothing more to fear or hope for, only the fact of her death to be grasped. Then her living presence seemed to surround me again, her nature compact of reassurance, understanding and loving sympathy, all seemed to be as it had been before. There was a stony calm inside me; I scarcely knew whether I was suffering or not; it went far, far beyond that, it was immeasurable. I simply realized that life was something for other people. I no longer had a life of my own. All that was left was my work. But everything personal, near and familiar had ceased to exist. As soon as I had performed my final duties towards her, I went away, as one locks the door and leaves behind an empty house with its closed shutters.

I am sending this letter to the post in order to find out whether there is a grey envelope with your handwriting in the postbag. I do not want to wait till the evening delivery. I have been writing to you since this morning. Now it is a hot, quiet, sunny afternoon. Here, on this low garden wall with the view across the lake one feels the summer coming. The water is dappled with flashes of sunshine. Monica! Monica! I am alone here in this expanse of shimmering light. I think of you and repeat your name to myself.

BEN T.

*Sunday, April 27, 1930*

DEAR FRIEND,

Shall I make a confession? Perhaps it is too soon—this is only my third letter. But I am conscious of so strong an impulse to come straight to the point in everything that

concerns you and me. This thing that has happened to us is so unheard of, so unprecedented, so peculiarly real—real in quite a different sense from anything I have hitherto experienced with anyone I have ever met before. So often an appeal reaches the heart, the blood is set on fire, the soul is stirred to the depths. Suddenly, out of the blue, some human being has drawn near to us, very near indeed in certain moments, which are filled to the uttermost with the urgency of that appeal. But now I know (indeed I had always an inkling) that there was still a last recess, a hidden core where the eternal gleams, which had never been reached. And now I have a strange feeling of certainty that I have attained to that reality. Therefore, dear friend, I will obey trustfully, unhesitatingly, every impulse which stirs me when you come to me.

Your letter, written beside the lavender hedge—I have as yet received only the opening pages and am looking forward eagerly to the continuation—really deserves a very different sort of answer. But first let me make my confession. There is a certain passage at which my horses shy. A wavering shadow falls across the road. I wonder if you have the remotest idea what that passage is? Can you guess? And will you understand me?

You describe yourself as a man who, “in the innermost depths of his nature, is purely receptive, purely a spectator, a consumer—and enjoys being such. . . .” Were it not for my intuitive knowledge of you—of which I am so infallibly, so unshakably certain—that self-revelation would alienate me utterly. “Nowadays,” I would say, like one of those fanatics whose antics you delight to watch with smiling detachment, “no one has the right to hold aloof.” I am a German woman. I belong to the War generation. How could I, in this year 1930, sympathize with the mentality of people who are able to look on without any desire to take an active part in influencing or altering the present state of things? I can imagine myself hating your beautiful house, your books, your prints,

if I were not perfectly convinced that that description was less than the whole truth. I can imagine a background against which your dispassionate calm would reveal itself as something greater, something very different—what do I know of what your life has been? But it seems to me now that it is incumbent upon me to tell you about us unreservedly. I see that I have written “us,” not “me.” By “us” I mean, in the first place, us two, my brother and myself, but it includes, too, my people as a whole, among us, with us, around us. Perhaps—with the well-balanced internationalism of your set—you will consider that it is tactless of me to take the bull by the horns in this outspoken way, that I am doing the very thing that Germans are always accused of doing, namely importunately forcing their unhappy fate upon the notice of other people—a fate which the world at the present day prefers to ignore. But I shall have to risk it.

The shying of my horses, following so closely upon the indescribable joy which the first pages of your letter gave me, brought home to me, with almost terrifying clearness, how unescapably, in the depths of our hearts, we are welded with life and passion to our fate. There is simply nothing that can lift us, in self-oblivion, over that shadow. You see, no sooner do we feel that for once we have freed ourselves, that we have found our way into another reality, than we are recalled, just as I was recalled by that passage in your letter.

I am not as young as you supposed. I was quite a mature person when the War broke out. I was twenty-four and had just completed my studies. It is my belief that the effect of the fifteen subsequent years was to make us, in a curious way, both older and younger than if we had lived a normal life. We were burdened with responsibilities beyond our powers, and at the same time thirsting all the more ardently for everything that had been crowded out of our lives, everything that in the nebulous, pre-War world was summed up in the term “youth.”

Shall I, by way of illustration, describe my own set to you? My brother is a year or two older than myself. I need hardly say that he served in the War. He not only shared the common lot of the soldier, but he was tormented as well by the political situation in the background. He is very clever and very serious, the kind of man who, on principle, never spares himself, never shuts his eyes to the actualities that happen to concern us. That is why the War, which at first eased him of the burden of a nature that craves for responsibility—that is what it amounts to; it is the legacy of many generations of officials—and made him almost young and light-hearted, presently came to mean to him, what in fact it was, the national destiny, the universal destiny. Very soon the blindness, which is doubtless essential to the man at the front, was lifted from his eyes. He lived through the whole tragedy, with a deeper and more inexorable consciousness than all the rest of us. For him the collapse was an appalling catastrophe. He brought his company back, and then disappeared for a whole month. I still know nothing of that time and have never touched upon it. Then he put himself at the disposal of the Government—at the sacrifice of all his traditions, doing violence to his own innermost nature, which, with all its best, most vital elements, was bound up with the past, with all the best and most vital elements of the old Germany, with those men of whom so little has been heard, because they held their peace and carried on. For him this acceptance was the continuation of his service at the front. The War, he felt, was not over. How could he refuse to serve? And now he has behind him ten years of daily toil at that labour of Sisyphus, which is implied in the words German Financial Economy. Ten years of vain endeavour, ten years without a breathing space, dedicated to a task which exacted a loyalty wrung from a heart, which could not unreservedly identify itself with the spirit animating German politics. You may have seen him at the League of Nations. He is sometimes invited to attend, as an expert, the meetings of the Finance

Commission. Such is the tranquil power which radiates from him when he is engaged in intellectual work that you would never guess what I have told you. When people in Geneva flatter one with praises of German "vigour," I often wonder if no one realizes that this vigour, like the writing on a palimpsest, conceals that resignation which I discern ever more clearly on the faces of my countrymen.

Am I making too great a claim on your sympathy, dear friend, for things that are so remote from the reality that is yours and mine? I almost fear it. But now I must continue my confession to the end—so that you may know to what bondage my soul is committed. This evening—or rather yesterday evening, for it is now three in the morning—some friends and colleagues of my brother's were with us. Among them were younger men—the youngest of the War generation. Our fireside, our roof-garden, and our unconstrained and friendly gatherings appeal to them. I can discern in them the baffled spirit of youth, the unsatisfied craving for everything that is light and harmless, gay and warm, for the wide, free sweep of wings through pure air above a peaceful earth. But when shall we ever succeed in freeing ourselves entirely? Perhaps, on the whole, they feel this least of all. But that which oppresses them is something different: the burden of wasted endeavour, the futile, daily struggle against insuperable obstacles in both the external and the psychological situation. And these men, who are always ready for unconditional sacrifice, for heroic action, are doomed to slave away at a structure, which is continually collapsing. When you possess, as I do, such a private source of happiness—is it not what you call in England "the secret orchard"?—you are doubtless all the more quick to recognize the melancholy which overshadows our best and ablest men, the men who are now at the height of their youthful vigour. I simply could not get away from it all to-day. You will not be surprised to hear that we spent the evening discussing the problems that confront the new Government.

These last weeks, the adoption of the Young Plan, and the subsequent collapse of the Government over the trifling matter of unemployment insurance were too depressing. But it is after all only one of the apparently never-ending phases of that eternal mutability, which, when all is said and done, can be traced back to causes which we cannot control and which make every German policy ineffective. One inadequate measure follows another. And these men who, after all, are anxious to bring up again some matter of German interest, instead of all those acts which are forced upon us and are doomed to failure from the outset, because they are false, both in relation to the German situation and to that of the world in general. . . .

My poor friend, I am inflicting on you this violent outburst with which my nerves are still quivering. But I console myself with the thought that I can bury this letter in my drawer—I, too, keep a drawer for the same purpose as you. I must go on writing, because I see you before me, with your calm, intelligent, humorous eyes, your mouth with its kindly expression, and especially, I think, your broad, athletic figure—the embodiment, it seems to me, of easy power under effortless control. And those large hands of yours, with their strong, quiet, careful grasp, to whose keeping all things, even those that are alive, may safely entrust themselves. We ourselves are all of us so full of uncertainty—everything within us becomes a burden, because there is no room for it to expand and develop. Our spare energy strikes inwards and weighs us down. With all these friends of ours, who were sitting there in the flickering light and shadow of the fire and were gradually thawing—has it struck you that firelight draws people out of themselves in an extraordinary way? It reveals to them the simple processes of change and the beautiful fugitiveness of words and gives them courage to unburden themselves—one is conscious of the state of mental strain in which they are living. Apart from the tremendous work they undertake, in the vain hope that by this



mustering of their energies they may contrive to conquer Fate, their souls are actually wandering—*à la recherche du temps perdu*. All of them have a secret locked away within them. What it is I guessed long ago: it is a yearning for the time when their lives had a common and reasonable object, for the solidarity of the front, or for something similar to it. I led one of our friends to tell me about his work. He runs one of the labour service camps for workmen and students. Perhaps you have heard of them. The young men live in camp and undertake voluntary work, such as improvements and road-making. The principal thing is the community life. From my corner in the shadow I saw how his secret enthusiasm for this work was written all over him—his hands, the hands of an agricultural labourer, gripped the arms of his chair like a handle of a spade; his tanned features, prematurely sharpened, quivered with the fanatical determination to create of his own energy that which fate had refused to grant him—a small circle of his own, which would stand for everything that was denied Germany in general. And I knew that in the very depths of his soul there was a hidden yearning for the hand of that dead miner, who, when he was mortally wounded on the Somme, clung to him, his officer, as if he were his share of home, his knightly St. George, from the niche in the miners' grimy meeting-place between the ventilating towers. He told me about him one day—and suddenly broke off, while the tears rose to his clear, keen eyes—and ever since then I have understood him and many others like him, who, in the restlessness of their hearts, cannot endure the quiet of their rooms at night and are impelled to roam about the fields, as if it were still war time.

It is an indescribable relief, dear friend for whom, though I knew it not, I have always longed, to have found a hiding-place for all these cares—these fears concerning the pent-up forces of heart and mind, my people's treasures of strength and talent, which are doomed to lie fallow or are condemned to an infernal impotence. But is it true that I may bring all

my troubles to you? Let me at least do so to-day. For to-day all this was so much a part of me that I could not shake it off and leave it behind on my journey to you. If after all this letter should find its way to the post, it will be borne thither by my deep unshakable trust in you—and in your love.

M. V.

LE PRÉ AUX MÉLÈZES, GENEVA,  
*Saturday, May 2, 1930*

There was nothing for it but to come to you at once. I knew it that afternoon when I stood with your letter in my hand, as though struck by lightning. You were right, a thousand times right. In my blissful absorption I had spoken to you as—well, as a man speaks to his own heart when he dwells in the isles of the blest. Monica, the faintest shadow of a misunderstanding between us is intolerable to me; I could not stay away from you another hour, inactive, alone with my thoughts. With the unerring sureness of your feelings, with the directness which speaks in your every glance, your every movement, you had said what had to be said between us. My heart repeated your own words—"There is simply nothing that can lift us, in self-oblivion, over that shadow."

Yes, for days together I had been completely absorbed, far from our dark world and its cramping realities. Now I was to disentangle in your living presence all that had become entangled. The train to Berlin left in a few hours' time. I could leave my little world to itself for a day or two. And then I was with you. And am still. I only wanted to be at your side, to listen and participate, leaving my own arguments, my own opinions, entirely on one side, for they would be bound to seem threadbare and inadequate to a person who is helping to shape the general life of Germany to-day. But then it all turned out so differently! Apart from being inwardly

bound up with you and experiencing your presence with all my senses, I was moved and touched by what I saw. I have often been in Germany during the last few years, and have felt all the more sympathy with that country because I knew practically nothing of the actual atmosphere of the War years. My son and I were then in Sikkim, entrusted by the British Government with investigating the apparent connection between the arrival of wool caravans from that district and the outbreak of certain deadly fevers on the North-West Frontier of India. The fever was believed to be due to a parasite which lived in the fibres of the wool, and we were able to provide proof of this. My son's illness kept me in Kashmir till the end of the War, so that I returned like Rip van Winkle to a European situation changed and distorted beyond recognition. I have tried to get some connected view of post-War Germany from my relatives in Dresden, in North Germany, and in the Rhineland, but I found it hard. One could never see Germany for the Germans. All had such different opinions, all were so convinced of the rightness of their interpretation of events, so easily roused against their own countrymen when they differed from them, so careless of the wounds of their fellows, who after all were companions in suffering, and yet so easily wounded themselves. I was like many others, I came full of sympathy and went away sobered. We all tried to grasp intellectually what could only be grasped in some other way. It is hard for the outsider to get away from this point of view. But this time I did not want to understand anything, I only wanted to take part in it. At first I again had a very strong impression that the outward life of Germany flows on with an amazing breadth and richness. How great must be the sum of individual energy, of personal efficiency behind it! Everywhere the usual picture of ordered activity—I admire the unknown civilian; no hymns have been sung in his honour, but he deserves them.

On the way to your house, and as I was going up in the lift, I had to pull myself together; I don't think I have ever

been so near to that unfamiliar state called "nervousness." And then you were out! I should have expected it, but it was quite a blow. I could not show how deeply disappointed I was. Your brother was out too—evidently a household of hard workers who are much in demand. All they could tell me was that you would be occupied the whole day with meetings and conferences and would speak in the evening at the Institute of Politics. That was hours away. I managed to reserve a seat by telephone for your lecture, then strolled through the Tiergarten and up the Linden. I fed the gulls on the Schloss Brücke, keeping my eye all the time on the sober, respectable façade of the building where I was to hear you speak. I could see the entrance through the trees. People talk about the Prussian style; I flatter myself I know something about such things, but what they say is Greek to me. They talk so loudly, so deafeningly, about it that if I were a Prussian I should lose my temper. There is something in this style that does not talk about itself. As I wanted to stay in the neighbourhood I carefully examined the historical buildings from the Schloss Brücke to the Brandenburger Tor. It was growing dusk and the evening was beautiful. Inside the guard-room, at the Ehrenmal, two solitary candles were lighted. I looked at it as I look at the Cenotaph in Whitehall, the tomb in Westminster Abbey, the little, flickering fire under the Arc de Triomphe. I cannot look at these things without a profound sense of guilt and self-condemnation. It should have been impossible! We twentieth-century men and women should never have suffered it! And we seek to rid ourselves of our guilt with these pitiable little sentimentalities. We believe, we *dare* to believe, that we can succeed. . . I looked round at the great open space in front of the buildings. Old Fritz looked very well on his tall horse, and his sharp, bright wit sparkled from the inscription on the front of the Opera House, which has been misbuilt at the rear into an unsightly mass of brickwork. "Fredericus Rex Apollini et Musis"—not at all bad. What a figure they have made of

him! He is now the patron of every conceivable thing. But in times like these a nation is always prepared to do a little violence to its great memories if they can gain anything thereby.

Finally I became a bit panic-stricken and hurried off to my seat in the lecture hall. I had a bad conscience, Monica! Yes, I hid behind that blackboard with a scarcely controllable feeling of uneasiness. I was anxious about the sort of figure I should cut in your eyes. I listened to your lecture as in a dream. Again and again the outstanding feature of your mind became clear to me, a comprehensive, penetrating way of looking at things that is quite beautiful, a way of managing complex material by which you make it clear and rational at a touch. In your speech, in the development of your ideas, there is something of the art which permeates your innermost being. I listened, gripped and entranced. And then—the fast car, speeding down the straight road through the dark Tiergarten with its mirrored lights, when you let me hold your hand. You knew everything, even that I was overwhelmed by the hurricane of my own feelings. Yes, I was paralysed with happiness and yet full of a joyous turbulence, and the very need to control myself was intoxicating. You looked at me calmly, gravely, but with a familiar intimacy, warm and moved by the emotion of our experience. How much, how much I admired you! I could do nothing but look at you. And then those wonderful hours by your fireside till far into the night. I felt the rise and fall, the full tide of love, hot and ardent like the rhythm of waves on the shore. It comes upon us with such unmeasured violence! I was seized, as it were, and held fast in an iron grip. Everything that came from you went straight into my heart—each word, each look, each breath. I don't suppose I was good for much, I was "bowled over" more completely than I had ever been before. And then you told me, so reassuringly—for I was worried whether I could count on seeing you again next day—of your little plan for a sail on the Havel, a whole afternoon at your

week-end cottage. And that afternoon grew into a thing of unforgettable beauty! Those little German houses by the water—there you have really created something unique. I can understand the surprise of foreigners: they believe, and rightly, that Germany is so hard pressed that she can hardly see a step in front of her, and yet the life of Germany flows down such a sharp gradient, it has so much natural power and inventiveness and love of action, that its sheer momentum carries it on, creating new and significant things almost without noticing it. Visitors from abroad often feel a sense of surprise, mixed with annoyance and quite sincere suspicion, when they catch a glimpse of these unknown and immeasurable forces in the German character. Foolish misunderstandings—but what do the responsible leaders of the nations do to remove them?

And then the second and last evening I spent with you! Under the lights, among the friends in your flat. The intense mental strain I suffered during those last few hours, when I was living only from you and in you! You were so much the centre, there was such a direct, easy give and take between you and your guests, that one recognized an old, habitual comradeship, a complete understanding. And I—you may smile, you are so bewitching when you smile—I was jealous, Monica. What have you to say to that? I was burning with a desire to be alone with you. I begrudged them you. I know now what it is, that wonderful and much-blasphemed emotion—I know how right, how splendid, how healthy it is! Can a man love without being jealous? I have had theories about it, too, in my abysmal ignorance. May be we are never so honest and sincere—and so defenceless—as when we are jealous. How real it is, without any room for self-deception! Yet I knew all the time that I liked those men exceptionally well. We talked; your brother fascinated me with his exemplary way of looking at things, so calm and circumspect. I felt afresh the charm that comes from the German mind when it allows itself to act quite simply and sincerely. What

a pity that this country never shows its true self, its full capacity, to its neighbours; what a disaster that before the War, at those turning-points in European thought, it did not grasp the intellectual leadership for which it was fitted by its deep and various talents. A decisive effort of will, a strong pledge to peace, to the unquestionable priority of the mind in the competition between peoples—if Germany, commercially thriving and “saturated,” had made that her watchword before the War, it would have been like a mighty beacon. We, who are friendly to Germany, should have liked to see her as a strong friend and propagator of peace. What disastrous leadership it was which caused her to be taken for an obstacle to peace, a constant threat! That tragic fact has troubled me for years. If I were a German myself, I could not regret more bitterly the sins of omission of the German leaders, for which the country has suffered for more than thirty years. Forgive me! How have I fallen into these reflections, when I am trying to say something quite, quite different? But here in Geneva we are so deeply interested in the new German Government; it is as though a strong, fresh wind were blowing from it into the frightful unreality and stagnation of the international atmosphere. New men! Really a new steersman at the helm, this Chancellor Brüning—how much I should like to ask your brother about all this! But perhaps there is a letter in the post. Guy has gone to the post office with the chauffeur. I have my watch in my hand. They may be back in ten minutes.

In all I see, in this garden, across the water and yonder in the wonderful up-piling of the mountain ranges, there is only one thing for me—the beloved profile, the brow, the young mouth. I have not the courage to tell you everything that mouth means to me. I am not yet properly at home; I am still in your room, among your circle of friends. I cannot get away from them. How little I know of you! I am always readjusting the circle of your friends, watching each one in conversation with you. Now I always see you among them,

I am uneasy about it all, afraid of it. I should like to make fun of myself, but that doesn't help. The human heart is a timid and suspicious thing!

A big boat with fine, square sails is just making for the farther shore. What would I give to dine with you to-night over there in the deserted Parc des Eaux Vives, and walk slowly back along the bank through the mild evening air. The shore is new and the landscape more beautiful than I have ever seen it before.

BEN

*Friday, May 1, 1903*

Your visit, Ben, was like a dream, one of those swift, overpowering, overcrowded dreams, which come but seldom, and from which you awake breathless and with beating heart. But there is a difference. This dream has so changed my waking existence that my whole surroundings are altered, and I have to adjust myself twice over—emerge from the dream and adapt myself to a world that you have transformed.

But now let me return to my dream. I have moved the small, portable writing-table to the fireplace, opposite the chair in which you sat, on that lovely, but terrible, evening, after your sudden appearance in the lecture hall at the Institute of Politics, just as the audience was dispersing. Mercifully it was not until the lecture was over. I was startled out of my wits, and perfectly furious with you. From a sportsman's point of view, you had managed very cleverly. In that rectangular hall, where concealment seemed impossible, you had actually secured the one seat in which I could not see you. One might almost suppose that you made a practice of stalking people. But what if I had gone to the blackboard, behind the corner of which you were concealed, as I might very well have done, and had suddenly found myself only a yard or two away from you? Had you thought of that? How lucky it was that the time was too short



for me to demonstrate on the blackboard, as I had intended, the organization of the Russian Co-operative movement!

But you know that as soon as we were together in the car, driving homewards, the blood rushed back to my heart, carrying on its warm tide the one overwhelming thought: you have come. You followed your impulse unhesitatingly, resolutely, actuated by your perception of that which should always be of paramount importance, the first commandment, which is so seldom obeyed: that those who are united in the depths of their being should, at whatever cost, cling to each other. For you it was just then of supreme importance that we should understand each other (as in our heart of hearts we did), and that you should give me the strongest possible proof of your boundless sympathy. How indescribably beautiful that sympathy was, in the midst of our overwrought, fear-ridden actuality, for, broken in spirit as we are, we have almost despaired of finding a heart that is prodigal of itself. Only that morning I had received the last part of your letter, containing the story of your life. It had stirred me to the depths of my being and made me very humble. I could never have written to you about it. What was there that I could say? How was it possible to touch upon it in words? But when we were in the car, I ventured, just for a moment, to lay my hand on yours, and I said to you that I had had your letter. And then you knew, I think, that I had locked it away in my heart, that story of yours, with love—and reverence.

And afterwards you sat over there in that chair by the fire, looking so beautifully at ease, so exquisitely self-contained. Every feature, every gesture spoke of inward freedom, a mellowness, a wealth of experience, and of far horizons, in which nature herself, bountiful, great and eternal, was mingled—nature, beneath whose gaze all things become simplified. You would hardly believe what a relief, what a solace it is to us to contemplate an attitude to life so different from our own, proceeding, as I said to you by the fireside that evening, from a Goethe-like ascendancy, which in Germany appears

to have perished, and which we are always yearning to recover.

But I cannot tell you, Ben, the most important thing of all—how around that circle of dancing firelight was woven the invisible net of our mutual receptivity—endless, inexhaustible and exquisitely exact. A mysterious current flowed between us—deeper than understanding. I felt as if every word, every movement even, served to unite us, centre to centre, whole to whole, all to all. How effortless, how direct, how complete was your comprehension of all that I said or left unsaid. There was not one overtone that you did not catch, and I knew for a certainty that I had this same gift in respect of you. Our intimacy deepened, until words became superfluous—were we not silent, sometimes, for a quarter of an hour on end?—and we could hearken to the pure vibrations of that hour which we shared, and listen to the hissing of the logs on the hearth. I impressed your image on my mind, such as you were that first evening, when we sat alone together, and everything within my mind was blissful confusion. But the second evening, too, I have not forgotten, when, after our long afternoon on the Havel, I watched you in the circle of our intimate friends. How beneficent you were, with your experience of other lands, your greater serenity of mind; and above all, your astonishing insight into our position at home and abroad, and your sense of justice. But those first hours, with the dark mysterious streams swirling through them, live on—no mere memory, but a covenant made once and for all.

And now you are here with me again—a tangible presence, and so you will always be, especially on evenings like this, when the sword is laid aside, and the tool drops from the weary hand, and deep longing rises like a mighty river overflowing unprotected banks, a flood which none has power to stay. Ah, to receive one's life again at the hands of another, its bloom renewed, to be conscious of it and to possess it!

You must not think that hitherto I have felt that there was

something lacking in my life. My work, my task, my friends, left me no room for such a feeling. And I have never understood this special yearning till now, when my meeting with you has revealed to me what divine richness of life may be shared by two persons.

I shall never again turn away from these dying embers without feeling the calm clasp of those hands, in which, dear and great friend, I place such boundless trust.

MONICA

*Postscript*

My brother wishes to be warmly and gratefully remembered to you. You helped him to unbend, because you saw this insane and hopeless situation from a different angle and threw fresh light upon it, and because you embodied something that was almost like an invisible and beneficent world power.

*Sunday, May 3, 1930*

MY DEAR, EVER-PRESENT FRIEND,

To-day, for the first time since your visit, I am here all by myself in our week-end cottage, so as to have the whole day for writing to you. (It need not actually all go down on paper.) My brother is in his study, tackling, without fear of interruption, an important piece of work, with which he could not cope in his ordinary office hours. It is months since he had a Sunday's rest. Don't you think he looks terribly tired? Tell me. Here we have no standards of comparison. And if we had, we could do nothing about it.

I am in the one big sitting-room, which you know. The doors on to the terrace are wide open, but I have lighted the fire. Last time it was you who lighted it, so cleverly and carefully. I have gathered the first violets of the year. Here they are. Outside, a fine spring drizzle is silently drifting down. The earth smells of pine needles. Such gentle rain envelops one so deliciously. There is something tender about

it. One has a sheltered feeling, almost as if one were reposing in the calm and exquisite refuge of your friendship and your sympathy. To-day I feel that they give me the privilege of writing to you without reserve. How comforting it is!

We are all watching with eager anticipation the working of the new Cabinet. My friends, some of whom you have met, see in the Chancellor not so much the leader of the Centre as the man of the war-front generation. They feel akin to him in a sense, which strikes athwart all parties, a new alliance, which seems to us full of promise. Consciously or unconsciously, we have long been waiting for this hitherto invisible sign to bring us together. Oh, if only I could be sure that it is not too late! It is so torturing, you know, when it is the perverse, the absurd, one might almost say the contradiction of reality that comes to pass, when acts arise, distorted images, ghosts of deeds from phantom battle-fronts, which simply do not spring from "the relative, the essential." But I doubt whether you know that poem of Rilke's, and if not you will not understand the allusion. This is how it runs:

"Blindly feeling our way through the Unknown,  
Vaguely making adjustment to the relative, the essential,  
Antennae grope doubtfully, seeking Antennae,  
When lo! a contact. Out of the void Immense,  
Is born a tension. Oh, Music of the Powers!"

With us Germans it is the other way round. There are many of us who do not "blindly feel our way," who are perfectly aware of our real place, and yet have to act without reference to "the relative, the essential." These parties, which have been frozen into the wrong places, keep people divided, who by rights belong together and could co-operate effectively. And now perhaps—who knows?—the possibility arises of a true and reasonable amalgamation of all those who trust one another. My friends are feverishly considering how they can give support to the Chancellor, how the readiness for service, which already exists, can be made apparent and efficacious. In the various party groups it can only be mani-

fested with a thousand reservations. I feel so happy—mainly because of my sympathy for these men of the war-front generation, who at last see a possibility of fulfilling their mission: the initiation of a patriotic policy, in which the great questions of Fate, of our future destiny, are given unconditional precedence over group interests and (with us, perhaps, this is stronger still), over obstinate opinionativeness. I am aware, however, of a feeling of doubt and resignation at the back of my brother's mind. Yesterday evening, while, in a mood of enthusiasm before the party broke up, we were making plans, drawing up lists, and drafting appeals, I could not help watching him: he forced himself to go along with us, but sometimes the glow of excitement, which he had caught from the others, yielded to an expression of indescribable sadness, which he swiftly suppressed when he saw me looking at him. Ah, it is just that he knows too much! And in my heart of hearts I know it myself. Behind all our hopes lurks the threatening problem of the economic position. Unless that can be solved, everything is in vain. An incalculable amount of brain power has been sunk in analyses and forecasts of the economic position. Heavens! the amount of literature on that subject! We have so much undisciplined intelligence among us which never approaches the field of actual practical reality, and is all the more vehement in criticizing, propounding theories, drawing up programmes and confusing public opinion. How often have I heard my brother slapping some pamphlet or journal down on the table with a gesture of despair! A man who has to act in accordance with what is possible, under the daily pressure brought to bear upon him from all sides at once—foreign and domestic politics, economics, finance—is roused to fury by all this clever talk—for it is often clever enough—on the part of a zealous intelligentsia. Have you the same impression, Ben, that all of us—the whole world—have entrusted our entire existence to an unseaworthy vessel? We cannot leave the ship, and how is it possible to rebuild the engines in mid-ocean? . . .

All this does not harmonize in the least with the vernal rain, the sweet-scented violets in front of me, and the Sabbath peace. When your name slipped from my pen just now, I found that my mind was wandering from my subject.

“Antennae grope doubtfully, seeking Antennae.”

Just now I misapplied that fine expression, which signifies union across the emptiness of space, but it was not to be put off. Against my will it led me in another direction: to you and to the meadows around your house, where the little clumps of primroses are now in flower. Up here we have no primroses. But I can see yours. I can see you setting out for a ride, for in the springtime, on such a day of rest, so full of promise, of significance, of richness, the only thing to do is to ride away at random, into the heart of the spring.

We are expecting a friend, Volker Brons. You met him—that fair-haired Frisian, with a serious war-wound, which is still a little noticeable when he walks. He is a friend of our childhood. He and I were asked to work out some details of yesterday’s plans. But I am almost afraid that he will not be in the mood for work, and the idea of work fills me, personally, with horror. Hour by hour, as I watch the falling rain and breathe the smell of the wet earth, I am more and more conscious of the surging of those pent-up undercurrents, which bear us away, out of all these years of strained and futile endeavour towards an existence in which one is simply borne along without having to swim. There is, I think, in all of us a wild yearning for relaxation, for deep-breathing repose, a longing to hear again the rushing sound of springs that lie deep within us. Perhaps after all we shall decide not to work, but to go for a row on the Havel, above whose still dark mirror the soft grey mist of this spring day is hovering.

Dear friend, your house and park, set in that glorious, far-flung, great, serene, immortal landscape, present themselves to that vague yearning like a forbidden Paradise. Whenever I feel that I am, as it were, riveted to our destiny

and the task it imposes, with every hour, with every throb of my pulse, the spacious freedom of your life hovers temptingly before me. And whenever I am aware of you, as one is aware of the essence of a Beethoven symphony or a cathedral, I am passionately conscious of the bitter-sweet thralldom that binds me fast to our devastated existence. But to know that I may say all this to you, and that you will understand it, is like that soft spring rain which a merciful Heaven showers down upon the earth. Write soon.

MONICA

LE PRÉ AUX MÉLÈZES, GENEVA,  
*Tuesday evening, May 5, 1930*

In the strange state of unrest in which I have lived since my return from Berlin, I could do no other than take my late evening walk alone by the lake with your Sunday's letter in my coat pocket—holding it tightly as though it were your hand. Now, from the window in the tower, the dark world is full of lights, the sparkling stars overhead and the sea of lights in the town and along the lake shore. I see it with a certain angry resignation—the hour and the place and the loved one are never together—why is it that one cannot make them meet? What a roundabout, complicated, obtuse means of communication is this letter-writing! I have so much to tell you. And so much to learn from you! I realized very clearly during those few hours in Berlin that we all ought to approach each other in a different way, we few Europeans who can see a little further than our own personal experience of these fateful years, who are more anxious, who realize that daily and hourly neglect constitutes a menace to everyone, a threat of doom coming nearer and nearer. I have become profoundly aware of all this. To my own surprise, the sense of union I have with those men, so alert and clear-sighted, whom I met at your house, has grown into an almost brotherly feeling. Suddenly I seemed to see simply and clearly what is at stake.

We live so unsuspectingly, most of us. Scarcely escaped from the madness of the first world-war, we are now rushing full speed towards the next. And the forces which resist this tendency, though they are terrific—one feels that on all sides—are not mobilized; they are scattered, unidentified, undiscovered. What must happen to us before we can break the spell, destroy the witchcraft that paralyses and distorts the whole situation? Hitherto I have been able to sit comfortably here looking on at these things, though I have felt a growing anxiety and that permanent uneasiness which we seem to regard in these days as more or less normal. And all the time the years are flying irreparably past; every month, every week, every day, a feeling of impotent despair, of barren hopelessness, is sinking deeper into a million minds and hearts. Each new disappointment helps to bury deeper the natural spring of healthy alertness, decision and ready action—no one can do anything to better his position, everything lies crushed under loads that we can neither understand nor escape, everything is tangled in a hopeless confusion. The individual has no longer any significance. He has to look on while his own future and that of his children are destroyed by things beyond his sight and comprehension. Where will these dammed-up springs force their way through?

Somewhere the water must be rising, gathering its great explosive forces. But what senseless waste! What lamentable stupidity! What we all want is so reasonable. There is not one among all the victims in all the countries of Europe who wants or approves of what is purely selfish, narrow and personal. The masses are susceptible as never before to the ideas of sweeping communal effort; they have a vague conception of the need for great experiments, concentric attacks on the gigantic muddle of this age and its civilization. They are inquisitive too—I am often touched by their healthy, sound, simple curiosity. How credulous they are! They believe that somewhere, someone will find the way out, produce the key, the right idea, the good will, force the



dark gateway, blast a way through the mountainous mass that has mysteriously inserted itself, a hostile obstacle, between human beings and their natural powers, hopes and resolves, frustrating the natural impulses of highly developed and intelligent nations. This ingenuous but indestructible hope and belief! This refusal to recognize the irrationality of things! This vigorous bracing of every muscle against the callous, the repressive! This readiness to accept the solution, the word of command, the gesture of leadership! One feels these things on every side! It is impossible for the nations to endure this state of mind beyond a certain point. Then, when the time is ripe, will come the breaking, the tearing, the bursting asunder. But what new fate will then descend upon this tormented continent? Where is the mind comprehensive enough to harness and guide these wild forces? Everywhere one finds the few who would give their hearts' blood to answer this question. True heroism—when I heard the talk round your fireside I realized where it is to be found—this virtue claimed and celebrated at every street-corner! In all countries, wherever the few are gathered, you hear the same talk of the same anxieties, the same duties. The war generation! It is a disastrous fact that European culture had not the sure instinct to bring together these survivors—survivors in the truest meaning of the word—from all countries. For their experience, their problems, their resolves and plans are identical, identical! Again and again one realizes how terribly true that is, when one hears so many people taking counsel together from all the parties, all the fronts. Survivors of hatred and madness, even more than simply of death. Death seems mild to many of them compared with the thousand torments of survival; many of them would rather they had been granted the same fate as their comrades whom they buried, the straight unquestioned end that solves all problems. These men ought to have met. They ought to have surveyed the situation, formed a common plan and advanced to a common attack. I do not know, but it rather seems to me as though the women, too,

should have the same feeling, as though their war experience, their presence in spirit in the front lines, should have welded a great link across the frontiers. Perhaps it is there all the time, but we do not know it; we have not admitted it to ourselves or to each other. It is all a matter of neglect and nothing more. But because of this neglect, the evil goes on growing and luxuriating and bearing fruit.

Why is not goodness alert and energetic and ruthlessly practical as evil is? Why does it let evil overtake it so often in the eternal Marathon race? Why has it not the same length of wind, the lightning perception of all the chances, the magnificent staying-power, and, especially, the same tireless industry? The forces in all countries that are now working again for destruction, that are heaping up new inflammable material and forging new weapons, are more purposeful, more zealous, even more self-sacrificing than the forces of goodness, which desire reconstruction and co-operation and are prepared to stake their all for the common weal. It is the old race between unequally trained, unequally equipped competitors. It happens again and again. "The bad have fairly earned a victory o'er the good, the vacillating, inconsistent good!" Fairly earned—that is the point. And we who all want the same thing, we hesitate, we shilly-shally, we miss again and again the irretrievable, inexorable hour. I realize this more deeply than ever before. After all the theorizing, all the admission and discussion of these facts by so many people from so many countries here in Geneva, the vital realization of their truth has just sprung up like a flame from a dry log, and I am shocked at the realness of the things one admitted long ago. It comes home to me, as we say in England. I wrote to you of someone who did not want to participate, did not want to act. That seems to me so long ago. I recognize again—no, this is really the first time—I recognize the inevitable compulsion to act. But is it not perhaps, despite the compulsion, a mercy—when, for instance, the piled-up faggots are fired by the lightning-flash—the only mercy

worth living for? But we recoil from it, we are afraid. All the really significant things in the world have come through the few rare souls who overcame that fear. Very rarely have we felt the merciful spark here in Geneva, but when it came it kindled us—the spark that fell upon a man, making him quail before his great and terrifying task, but making him accept it and do the work of two in a mighty effort to remove the monstrous obstacle that lay in his path, and, at the same time, to lift by his own irresistible faith the terrible weight of human indolence and indifference, transforming it for one historic second into active power. In such a moment, at such a place, the divine becomes active, near and tangible; for a moment the world is transformed and miracles happen. But how rarely! What weak contemptible instruments this divine energy has to use!

Here in Geneva we have repeatedly seen such things with Frithjof Nansen. His strength and tenacity were acquired in very different struggles, his sound common sense was trained in the conquest of the elements, but he had to apply them to the overcoming of human weakness and ill will, to the defeat of subtle intrigues, the breaking down of set, cramping resistances, compounded of human egoism, century-old habits of injustice and senseless, callous indifference. It is a stirring thing to watch this struggle, to see what a man can make of his job and what the job can make of a man, to see a fighter wearing himself out, literally consuming himself, gaining ground inch by inch against hostile opposition, passing from the vigorous prime of life to white-haired old age, haggard and worn, but still unconquerable and full of that mysterious power which bursts at last out of those who have forgotten themselves and are now no more than labourers in the vineyard. The transport of millions of people from the Turkish territories in Asia Minor to Greece, the organization of the great campaign against the Russian famine—these achievements are almost beyond belief. But since these things were done it has become clear that they were no more than

a drop in the ocean, and that the exertions of a hundred thousand fighters of equal resolution, decades of equally unselfish devotion and sacrifice are necessary before the unsolved post-War problems are on the way to solution. There is crushing misery almost everywhere. New problems, incalculable and urgent, have already arisen, and the dead weight of things and circumstances is too great for human strength. Nansen has the inestimable advantage in all he undertakes of knowing that he has behind him the steady support of his own country and the sympathy of all who believe in the present value and future potentialities of a vigorously supported League of Nations. His power is strongly rooted in his northern home.

If only you were here! What I would give for your presence! The days are full of you; I have been writing this letter, with many interruptions, since the day before yesterday and managing at the same time to look after my house where another small conference—this time of educational experts—is being held. I have a great respect for really talented educationalists and am interested in what they discuss together. My cousin has come over from England and invited a number of representatives of the scout movement. He is himself a County Commissioner in the English scouts and has made several practical changes of organization which aim at simplifying and decentralizing—both instinctive needs of the English mind. I am allowed to attend their meetings as “a born grandfather,” an honorary title they have bestowed on me. *L’art d’être grandpère!* I should be very proud if it turned out that I had such a talent. As a father, I could only share from a distance in my boy’s growth and development, though that has not vitiated our healthy, comradely attitude to each other, for he was lucky enough to have a grandfather with a gift for grandfatherhood. But for that reason, I find it necessary in my old age to have young people about me and to give my mind to their needs and requirements. I see much that is good in the English boy-scout leaders; they

show a happy combination of manliness and sensitiveness. For years I have missed in this great world-wide organization (for that is what the scout movement has become) the vigorous assertion of the German standpoint. You find it here, too. It looks as though Germany had not recognized the possibilities of a strong, unconditional, purposeful co-operation, which would retain what is characteristically German, in this work of character-forming and education. Were it not for the feeling in my heart's very core that I am partly German—that is the Frieder in me!—I should not dare to mention it to you. It is because I believe, because I know, that you understand me, that I write frankly and as a real member of your circle, which in truth I am. I know that beyond all doubt since those few days in Berlin. Tell me I have your permission to be so simple, so brotherly. As I write I find myself wandering more and more from one subject to another, and I feel the increasing need of your presence here! The place is getting so beautiful. All the meadows are yellow with primroses; they shimmer under the hazel and elder bushes by the lake—there is that soft flowery scent everywhere, which always drives me into the country in springtime, even now in my old age. And what a spring this is for me! I see it all with the feeling that I am showing it to you. Your violets have not lost their scent. I cannot bear the thought that you were alone in your week-end cottage—and still less that you were not alone! . . . I think of you without ceasing.

B. T.

BERLIN,

*May 7, 1930*

DEAR BIG BROTHER,

These words rose to my lips spontaneously, so deeply was I touched by your brotherly kindness this evening. I found your letter, in its blue-grey envelope—I always

recognize the tiniest corner peeping out from a whole pile of correspondence—lying on the little smoker's table in front of the fire. (We have a fire every evening still, but there are spring flowers on the mantelpiece.) I read it through at once, standing by the big armchair in which you sat that day. If you had been there this evening, I should simply have kissed you. I know I should have kissed you and I made up my mind that I would tell you so: the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. Isn't that, more or less, the wording of the English oath? I want to make this applicable to everything I say to you. That is the unique, the unprecedented beauty of it all, to be so firmly convinced that I can do this frankly and unreservedly. Everything you write gives me such joy.

For so long, we Germans were the concentration camp of Europe, almost, I might say, in quarantine for plague, fatally forced back upon ourselves. Something resembling auto-intoxication was the inevitable result. You know I am most firmly convinced—it is often in my thoughts—that there is only one way in which this terrible conglomeration of passions and moods in a nation can be dissolved and healed. It is by means of that "essential relationship" to other nations, through natural, objectively given intercourse, through intelligent co-operation. But thanks to that Treaty of Versailles, which was dictated by all the spirits of evil, the same malady was to some extent bound to affect the other nations as well. It seems to me as if this body of Europe were being devoured by a kind of cancer, a hardening of the living tissues, followed in due course by decay, as a result of which dangerous metastases were circulated through the whole body. In this psychological condition we are confronted with a situation, with which only the spirit of unconstrained solidarity can cope. And the opposition between the task that lies before us and the suspicious machinations of the powers around it spreads the poison farther.

Some day someone must destroy all this. But who? You made me very happy by hitting on the same solution as

I myself: "the survivors of the War," in the full meaning of the phrase. That is exactly what I feel myself, as a woman and a member of the war-front generation. Only they can effect this who, ever since 1914, have taken an active share in everything, who have drained to the dregs the cup of the sublimest and bitterest hours, and are still alive—that is to say, men who are not in any way at the end of their powers, but are capable of bringing about a renaissance of the world out of this tremendous experience. We know that such men exist in every country. They must exist. They are not the "internationalists," but the true nationalists of the spirit. This determination cannot, I think, mature in any "neutralized" zone, lying between those regions, in which blood and love, the demons of the past, and the will towards the future, exist together. The powers of such a zone would be too feeble, too inexperienced, too untried to grasp the vital essences of past events. It is the depressing and paralysing effect of this neutrality of which I am so conscious in the constitution of the *Co-opération Internationale* in its present form. I cannot believe that out of a philosophy of resignation, or of indifference towards the will to live manifested by my own people, a fruitful state of the world can evolve. The task does not fall within the scope of a philosophy which would reduce all things to a dead-level of conformity. The elementary forces of history must be welded together by the creative spirit, in a framework of the actual unities of life, which have arisen as universal phenomena, transcending national boundaries. Europe! If one could resolutely make up one's mind to it! What a relaxation of all the anxious, perplexed and vain activities, in which the best men nowadays exhaust themselves, and which never touch the actual problems. It is the same, more or less, with all nations. What waste of men there has been everywhere in the last ten years, yet surely nowhere such hopeless waste as in our own country. But who has the power to give that tremendous impetus which, in a higher sense, will inspire and unite all that latent

intelligence? To-day such intelligence is frittered away in all kinds of minor enterprises in the field of internationalism, which are well meant but of no significance, each effort being in itself inadequate to that colossal task, and therefore without either force of conviction or proselytizing power. This applies equally to the "Women's International," in spite of the energy we devote to it. How many men are there who take us seriously? How many women who have any idea of what its object is? And the cry which we ought to send ringing through the world, around the whole earth, the great, warning cry of the mother animal at the approach of danger—who shall find words stark enough, who shall raise the clamour that will shake the heart? Ah, I have a foreboding that we have long since frittered away and spent the *donna lacrimarum* of the Great War, because, throughout the world, all who were burdened with guilt and oppressed with shame had not strength to envisage that heritage steadfastly, and to submit. I have a fear that nothing will ever be strong enough now to drag together the forces which have been dispersed in all directions, as a consequence of this utterly ineffective balancing of considerations—nothing but a new catastrophe.

Dear Big Brother, I am taking unfair advantage of your sympathetic attitude. You cannot wish our letters to degenerate into a kind of "interchange of notes." And it is really not that I would rather talk of these great matters than of our friendship. But you cannot guess what your proposal to exchange views on these subjects meant to me, and the permission to discuss them with such a friend, as I have never before possessed.

And now I have something else to tell you. It was like an accompaniment of music to the writing of this letter. The week after next I am coming to Geneva. The course of lectures about social policy in the economic crisis, of which there had been some talk last March, is to be delivered at the Institut Universitaire des Hautes Études Internationales. And I am coming, not for that only, but—the whole truth, and nothing but the truth—so that I may see you, ride with you, delight



in your flowers, have tea with you, talk with you, be silent with you. Isn't it lovely? May in Geneva—with you! I shall stay at the Carlton Hotel. I arrive by the evening train on Friday, the 16th.

Till then—for I have no patience for letters, when the living present is within my grasp, I remain, full of the joy of May,

Your very happy,  
M. V.

GENEVA,

Friday, May 9, 1930

If I had been there by your fireside, Monica, and had really received your kiss, it could not have pierced my heart with more kindling fire. I do not know whether there is any flash of sunshine or of lightning that can so strike a tree that it knows to its topmost twig, aloft in the daylight, and to its lowest fibre of root, below in the earth, what is happening to it. That is how I knew what was happening to me. My arms closed around you with a heavenly violence of feeling—and opened again before a second had passed—it was a hot, abrupt sensation, such as only dreams can give. But I have derived from that moment an indescribable appeasement. The feeling of your physical nearness is in me, stronger than ever before, it deepens as I think of it, so that you seem to be here in the low chair by my desk, and I can almost feel your shoulder against mine. Delight flows through me like a stream. You are coming! You are coming! There is a freedom, a vivacity in everything, a sense of a happy, active beginning! It is as though all sails were set, and the gods had sent at last the long-awaited breeze. In my little dog-eared edition of the *Odyssey*, which for some strange reason is in French, there is an exact description of how the ship, after lying long at anchor, "*ouvrit largement ses voiles au vent propice.*" I have set my house in order; I cannot

spend these delicious, intolerable eight days until you come, Monica, as a respectable householder in his every-day surroundings; I am going to camp with the boy scouts. The Genevese *éclaireurs* are doing their training in the mountains above Champéry, and my cousin and Guy, who belonged to a patrol when he was at school in England, want to go too. It was Guy's suggestion—bless him!—that I should go with them, and I have never felt so honoured as by this suggestion from a boy of twelve. We shall sleep in tents and sit round the camp-fire! We shall gather fuel and cook and do good rough jobs. Nothing better could have happened to me. To avoid being too much of a burden to the boys, I am taking with me officially all sorts of kit for botanizing and zoologizing! Now they will leave me in peace when I want to write to you, for I may have to send you another letter. I am so delighted at the thought of going that the time cannot pass quickly enough. This big, silent house is filled with the expectation of your arrival. You will be here, here in this corner of the garden, by the little, low wall with the view across the lake. You will climb with me into my room in the tower, and sit on the broad window-seat in the evening when the lights round the lake are all lit. We shall put a candle in the old sconce, which I have fastened to the wall by the window. One must have a light in a tower-window, I do not know why, but I always have one when I am up there. It shines far across the water, and somehow I felt I must have it when I was writing to you. It is wonderful to leave all this behind, just as it stands, all ready for your coming. I have spent the whole day arranging it properly. What magical fulfilment! For a long time now I have seen everything in your company, discussed everything with you. And now I leave it behind me and go out with just a handful of things in a rucksack. Everything superfluous has been discarded, everything has been simplified to the last detail for these days of waiting.

I may meet you at the station—may I not?—and drive you

acquire the same capacity for daring, for attacking with utter selflessness the thousandfold more numerous enemy, accepting all the responsibility for the sake of the children. I am sure there is great wisdom, a whole world of thought and deed, in that phrase of yours about the mother animal in danger. I have so many things to ask you, I cannot wait. I hold my heart firmly, Monica, lest it should burst with impatience. In four days you will be riding in my car through the spring twilight. I can smell the strong scent of grass in the evening sun!

BEN

BERLIN,

*Early morning, May 14, 1930*

DEAREST FRIEND,

I feel that I must send you one more word of greeting to Champéry—or perhaps you are home by this time. I was deeply affected by the death of Frithjof Nansen. By a curious coincidence, the great leader of the German Women's Movement, Helene Lange, passed away on the same day. This accident of time made me realize how closely akin they were to each other. I must show you a photograph of her some day: a woman quite definitely Nordic in looks and ways. She was just the type to match this man, his feminine counterpart: a resolute, independent personality of calm, creative powers. If only the world could henceforth bear the stamp of the kind of heroism manifested by both of them—or if it could at least come to a proper appreciation of it! I do not know whether, and to what extent, Nansen was a personal friend of yours. I can well believe that you two were friends. But I know that when the news reached us, our hearts went out to each other, and it is happiness to me to be so sure of this.

And the day after to-morrow—actually the day after to-morrow—I shall see you again. How lovely the night will be, through which I shall be travelling towards you!

Your MONICA

*Evening, Friday, May 16th*

I am writing in the car. I have parked it here with dimmed lights under the garden wall of the hotel. There is still a light in your windows. I cannot possibly drive home, cannot possibly do anything rational, so long as that light is still shining! How good it was of you to let me drive the long way round, to let me keep you another quarter of an hour. That slow, unruffled, enchanted ride past gardens, blooming magnolia-trees, tender green bushes, so young, so gay, all illumined by the lights of the car. I felt your shoulder against my arm. True happiness is quite wishless, I always knew that—unless it is the sum of all wishes to call upon the passing moment to stay. When I had to turn back—it all happened in silence as though we had already made up our minds what to do—I hoped you would take the last vestige of that sting of jealousy out of my heart, that sting that is always there now, and rightly so! I have a respect for it and look forward to only temporary appeasement. But you are the only one who can give it, and you gave it when you said you would be staying in your room and not coming down again. I lacked the courage to ask if I might stay and dine with you. But I did not want you to go through that solemn, tedious ceremony alone in the dining-room, while I was spending this first precious evening far away. And so I was soothed and reassured. That spontaneous, natural, unobtrusive feeling of belonging to each other! I think of it so much and taste its flavour so rapturously. It is the essence of love, expressed once for all in the lines of an old English romantic writer: “Thy elder brother I would be—thy father—anything to thee.” Anything to thee! That is it! The sting in my heart reminded me that I could not, as one of those enviable relatives, open your luggage for you in your room, that I can do nothing for you and moreover that you would much rather do everything for yourself. I know that perfectly well, and yet the wish remains! Now that you are no longer with me, it is the second kind of happiness, which simply teems with wishes. But still it is

happiness. I can write to you here, in the small, bright circle of my pocket lamp, in the darkness of the car. The street is as empty and quiet as death. To-morrow morning I can come back and fetch you: we are going to lunch together. The afternoon and evening will belong to others, and the day after to-morrow will begin your lectures and the thousand and one things they will lead to. I know all that, but I live from hand to mouth on the little drops of happiness spilled from the cup of the goddess—you know that lovely little poem of Hebbel's? So light and yet so true, written by that ponderous fellow with rare grace. To-morrow forenoon belongs to me, all to me! "*Lass ihn fallen, den Tropfen!*"

What shall I say to you? Your voice, your smile, are like a song in my heart. You have a beautiful mouth, Monica. Your lips meet like the lips of the women Leonardo drew—not the ones he painted—the head of St. Anne, for instance. He often drew those beautiful closed lips, not smiling, but, so to say, in the mood for a smile. We have in the British Museum a number of those miraculous trifles of his, the look in an eye, incredibly conscious and alive, and those lines of a woman's mouth. To-night in my room I shall look at the mouth of St. Anne. How marvellously womanly! What is it, this loveliest and, praise God, most immortal of things? This miracle that happens to a man and transforms and transfigures the world he thought he knew? God, what frightening happiness, the thought that you are coming to-morrow—that to-morrow you will enter the yellow room that has been yours since that afternoon! To-morrow you will see it all, take charge of it all again. I shall not go to bed to-night, I must look at everything in that room, take in my hand the things that pleased you, and think of your eyes. Till sunrise!

Then I must take Selim out. He knows those early rides; he is so lively that it is a pleasure to be on him. You can tell that he needs a quick, uphill gallop to whip up his blood. He pulls on the reins like a four-year-old. It is the finest hour of the day, the brightening dimness of the paths, and overhead

the first, long, groping sunrays. And the smell of the earth! But now the stars are all twinkling down on this dark, sleeping street. The whole front of the hotel is lighted, but that is no concern of mine—my eyes still cling to your windows. You are there! There! You have done a little unpacking, and you are reading now, a book or a letter. Perhaps a letter! I wanted to give you a long, long letter with the flowers, but I could not find the words to express what I hope the colours, the petals, the play of soil and sunlight in those tulips, will say to you! I wanted to fill your whole room with flowers. But the tulips were so confident, so headstrong and arrogant! They thought they alone could tell you what I wanted told. Read this letter to-morrow. I will have it delivered quite early. The car will fetch you about ten. To-morrow you will be picking flowers in my garden, wallflowers and primroses—all the shore of the lake is yellow with them. I cannot write down all the things I should like to show you and do in your company. It is so delightful and so disturbing, that bright window above me. I feel that you know I am still waiting down here in the dark, in the dark, in the deep magic of your nearness, still listening to the sound of your voice, that peculiar cadence of the plucked cello-string. The light has just gone out in your windows. Good night, Monica! A good, good night!

BEN

CARLTON HOTEL,

*Saturday, May 17, 1930*

MY BELOVED FRIEND,

I am not allowed to see you, perhaps not for a long time yet. I sit here, helpless and shut away, and I am not to see you. And it worries me to think that this enforced absence of mine may make you more restless than if I were allowed to hold your hand, just for one moment, one little, little moment. "Mr. Tarland is not allowed any visitors for

the present," so they told me on the telephone this very morning, after the brief announcement of your accident, which has opened a dark chasm, into which my love and terror gaze in bewilderment. I hardly ventured to ask for further details. I am only a visitor and am doubtful how far I may go in my manifestations of sympathy. All I know is that after you had met me at the station and driven me to the hotel—how happy we were!—you first went home, and that later your horse came down with you. So you had gone for another ride. Dear, dear friend, this letter will not be given to you in your present condition, and yet what can I do but write to you? I am with you in spirit every moment. What a relief it is to think that my lectures do not begin till Monday!

What a divine morning! Sad and angry, I look from my window across the plane-trees and the larches at the glittering lake. We were to have gone riding together—on this one holiday, which was to have been ours. Instead . . . what may be happening? If only I knew! Every moment I imagine that there is a sudden movement in the telephone beside me; and I snatch up the receiver, so as not to lose a fraction of a second.

How helpless one can be! There is no path by which I can come to you. It is as if you had been reft from me. I asked your household to telephone to me as soon as you regained consciousness. And now I keep on writing, because I am afraid to stop, for what should I do then? You once wrote something about jealousy. That is what I am enduring now, the most terrible, impotent, maddening jealousy, not towards people, but towards that power, which has snatched you from me, and against which one is helpless, utterly helpless.

Thank God! That cry of thanksgiving was the first wild throb of my pulse. When I heard the sound of the telephone, and a voice saying: "Le Pré aux Mèlèzes," my heart stopped beating. You had recovered consciousness: there was apparently only slight concussion and no other injury. Heavens!

How am I to endure the days of complete isolation, which you will doubtless be ordered! It will be terribly hard. These precious, fragrant days of spring, which seemed to be a gift to you and me. Well, they will pass, I know, and soon I shall see you again, dear, careless Ben. What can you have been doing for a thing like that to happen? It must have been something rash, and I shall have to scold you for exposing our plans to the malignancy of envious fate. Oh, how splendid it will be when I *can* come and scold you!

It will probably be some hours before I hear further news of you. I shall seize the opportunity to drive to the Institut Internationale and pay some duty calls. I shall take with me the last letter you wrote to me from Champéry. It lies beside me, in the shadow of your glorious, gay, many-coloured tulips, a joyous, reassuring token of your existence and your nearness.

O Ben, God bless and keep you—is it presumptuous to say, for my sake?

MONICA

*Evening*

And this moment, immediately on my return, I have found the letter you wrote yesterday evening in the car. And just as I was longing for you so passionately, Guy arrived with the cowslips, and your note of three words. Thank you, Ben, thank you. More than that I will not try to say. The boy was enchanting. He tried to make light of the whole affair—a man thinks nothing of an occasional pip from his horse—and yet in his heart of hearts I could see that he was thoroughly frightened and upset. The mere fact that he picked those flowers for you speaks volumes for a man of twelve. I asked if he minded your passing them on to me and he extricated himself very gracefully. “The flowers were intended to give you pleasure,” he said, and you “loved to have a nice present for Miss Velmede.” He is to take this letter with him, but I made him



promise, honour bright, not to deliver it unless the doctor gave permission. He suggested—evidently impressed with the urgency of the matter—with the practical common sense of a boy scout, telephoning to the doctor at once from the hotel, and was much disappointed when he could not get on to him. Thank you so much for your offer of the car. If you are sure it is not wanted, may it call for me at the hotel at half-past nine to-morrow morning?

Yours ever,

MONICA V.

CARLTON HOTEL,

Sunday evening, May 18, 1930

You know, Ben, I shall not be able to come to see you to-morrow. Lecture, luncheon, tea, debate, social evening—damn it! But I have permission to write you a letter to-day. I tried to elicit—very diplomatically as I thought—from your wise, humorous doctor friend, whether you were allowed to have letters. But he saw through me—or perhaps through you—at once. I knew that by his smile, when he replied: "*Tout plaisir est permis, Madame, qui ne fatigue pas.*" So now I have a diet sheet for you, beloved patient. That term, by the way, does not describe you at all. In the first place you are certainly not "patient"; neither am I. And secondly you are not really ill. But you have been careless and are now paying the penalty. So I can allow myself a little chat with you. "*Plaisir sans fatigue.*" That means certainly not a word about my lecture. I can tell you about that when we meet, if you are interested. But there are certain things of which it is difficult to speak when one is face to face. I want to talk to you about this afternoon, Ben, and my visit to you. But is there anything one can say about a feeling, which resolves itself into just the pounding of one's heart? When I arrived in Geneva two evenings ago, and on my right the scaffolding of the new buildings of the League in the Ariana in front of

the Carlton Hotel came into sight, while on my left, towering above the streets of mean houses, the shadowy outline of Mont Blanc loomed in the gathering twilight, and I saw the name Genève-Cornavin, I could feel my heart swell like a sail *au vent propice*. But to-day it was quite different. It was not that I was worrying about the state in which I should find you. After the second report I had of you, I was no longer really uneasy. But I felt that the circle surrounding us would be drawn closer around us, through that new sense of nearness, which springs up between two people, when one of them is laid low by that sinister power, which Goethe calls "blind circumstance." You must not misunderstand me. I nursed during the War. I am not one of those women who delight in an orgy of compassion. I used to make a kind of pact of defiance with my wounded. We resolved to escape as soon as possible from that damnable condition of invalidism. Men, who enjoyed being nursed, repelled me. My brother and I have never been so short and brusque with each other as when he was wounded. We both knew the reason and understood each other perfectly. We hated it. But I knew, Ben, nevertheless, that the silence and restraint enjoined upon you and me would create a new atmosphere. Quieter, more intimate. We were to be alone, you and I, without interference, not only from other people, but from all those problems and questions which usually occupied us. And when I entered your room my heart was beating fast.

It was delightful that no artificial shading of the light was required and that there were no signs of the sick-room around you. Even if there had been no doctor's orders to remember, nothing would have been different, I think. It was the most overwhelmingly perfect late afternoon in May that the fates could have devised. It is almost profanity to attempt to speak of its divine fullness, both within and without, but since you experienced it yourself, it is no great matter if my words are inadequate. I kept wondering what the doctor would say to this adventure of tea together. That is why it was so reassuring

to know that it was in accordance with his orders that your divan had been moved into the recess of the window, where that beautiful great cedar kept the light away from you. I could sit opposite you, and gaze at you, and see in the background all that light-green, sunny, fragrant world, reaching from the terrace down to the lake. But you must go slow for a little, beloved friend. I know you would never confess to pain or discomfort, but on that face, which I know so well, about the forehead and the terribly energetic mouth, there was a drawn look, which my war experience enabled me to interpret. I made careful note of that look of yours, not with the eyes of the trained nurse but—when all is said, Ben, I see you only with my heart, directly, without other medium. Dear friend, whom I love with all the overflowing richness of this May day! And so there is no fear of my abusing the confidence your doctor placed in me.

The glass roof over our beautiful courtyard has been opened; above its silver-blue square, and above the plane-trees, night has spread its starry canopy. It is overwhelmingly beautiful. Night seizes upon one like a loving deity, even as that lingering May afternoon, which wove us into its tapestry of fading gold. Again I steep myself in that afternoon. The aroma of coffee and cigarettes floats around me above the ripple of after-dinner talk. In the adjoining room I hear the click of balls. Some German officials, young men who are here for a conference of the International Labour Bureau, are amusing themselves with an elementary kind of billiards. I love to feel this stir of life around me, the lapping of the waves, which confirms me in the possession of my blessed isle. Now that I come to reckon up the time, I am afraid that I stayed with you far too long. How the moments of our silence gathered themselves together to a fountain, which rose ever higher and higher like the *jet d'eau* in the lake down there. Everything was full of the spring. "Each hour grew younger as it sped." Did they not bear us along with them, those hours that renewed their youth? Have you ever before

had such a sense of being simply carried along, floating without effort on that stream without a name? But now I am talking of myself. As if I did not know that it was the stream of your strength on which I was drifting! It flowed towards me out of every look, every smile, every word—out of your very silence. Thank you; thank you. And now, good night. God be with you and bless you to-morrow, all the long day through.

MONICA

I will ring up to-morrow evening. But I don't want to talk to you personally. Not on any account. I hate telephone conversations. You will send me word how you are?

*Monday, May 19, 1930*

Why do you hate speaking on the telephone, Monica? It can be delightful when we two are speaking with no one to hear. I can hardly wait until this evening to try my luck and ring through to your room. Perhaps you will call me first, but in any case I shall speak to you and hear your voice. The telephone is close to me as I lie on the verandah by the wide-open windows, just as I did yesterday. It is still early morning, the long, long day without you is one deep draught of yearning, a dream of which I would not lose a minute. I am feeling wonderfully well. As I told you yesterday this accident, this rather shadowy experience, of which I know little except by hearsay, has done me good in some peculiar way. It was such an anticlimax! A violent shock after that blissful, high-spirited ride into the blue! I have come through it quite well. The doctor does not hide his satisfaction. He says I have grown ten years younger since I have been living by his beloved lake. That is, he says, the traditional effect of the place, and my accident has proved that I react like a "youngish man." Youngish people, in his experience, need only a few days, while apparently the oldish ones need

rather longer to recover from the effects of *commotio cerebri*. Selim, however, must be quite a child, for when the shaft of the rack-waggon loomed out of the fog he simply bolted. For some undiscoverable reason the peasants had left the thing standing close to the path. All I remember is my head crashing into something. Selim was caught half a kilometre farther on by the same peasants as they came back to their deserted waggon, and when they reached it they found me there. Shall I complain of plans gone awry when yesterday, here at these windows, I lived through the most dreamlike afternoon that a human heart can ever have known? Dream-like! That is the only word for it. I am allowed to write for ten minutes; I promised the doctor on my word of honour, and the ten minutes are now up. But he did not tell me how often I could write for ten minutes. So now I shall lie still for an hour, looking out of the window and picturing to myself the outlines of your figure as I saw it yesterday in the big basket-chair. I can do it so easily, especially when I close my eyes. And then I will write to you for another ten minutes.

It was the *Antennen*—I spent half the night reading and dreaming over them, that night before the ride. I looked up that lovely passage you told me of. I know very little Rilke, but I went on reading him for hours and found very lovely things. And all the time I had the picture of that beloved mouth—really, the lines are the same! I held it to the light of the lamp, studied it, absorbed it. I could not escape from it. And mentally I cried again and again: “O night, pass quickly! For here, only a few minutes from me, is the house where she sleeps.” I tried to think of all kinds of sensible things that we could do together, people here in Geneva whom we could call on. But my heart ran away with me. I could not escape from your eyes, from the feel of your hand in mine. What undreamed-of intimacy there can be in a handclasp—it leaves practically nothing to be said.

“How shall I keep my soul from touching yours? How shall I raise it above you to other things?”

Then at last the light was strong enough. I went out to meet the beloved day. Outside the house, the verbena smelt like lemons, and I made up my mind to put a few leaves in my next letter to you. Down by the lake, I heard the cracking and rustling and splashing of all kinds of small water creatures among the reeds. I got out Selim. The little mare had to stay behind in the dark stable, so I let her nuzzle into my coat-pocket for sugar. She is a clever little creature, and soon learned how to do it. Irish horses are as quick of wit and hearing as Irish people, and a good deal more sensible. My ten minutes are up.

The doctor has been. So has Guy. He wanted to know whether he might show you his day-old chicks and his home-made coop next time you come—next time! He is learning chicken-farming on a small scale, and has helped the carpenter to build a coop and run of the latest pattern. The day before yesterday, when I had my accident, he had just let out the fifty day-old chicks he has been so eagerly looking forward to. He is most impatient to show them to you. We do not know yet what progress his eyes are making, so he is working daily in the fresh air and thus acquiring practical knowledge which will stand him in good stead later on if he has to get his living in that way. We are running the thing in a strictly businesslike way. He has put in a bit of money that belonged to him, keeps exact accounts and is trying to make the scheme self-supporting. I have often noticed that children can be very cautious and calculating in their own affairs. I shall be very interested in watching him.

The doctor has given me an excellent report. I am to be allowed up to-morrow. I wonder if you will come? I do not want to make any plans; it is enough to accept the wonderful gift of mere living, just as it comes from heaven. I shall hear your voice to-night. It is lucky that the house is still empty.

At the end of the month the annual round of guests will begin to arrive, old and young, but the young ones first. This summer will probably bring certain strains and tensions, but in a way I am looking forward to them with pleasure. The youth of England is changing; nothing is more remarkable than these living currents in the generations. Among English people especially they are often hardly perceptible from outside and yet they go deep. In England the new flows so easily in the channel of the old; there is a kind of general taciturn agreement to handle the ancient heritage with care. And there is real culture, I think, in the fact that, stronger than all impulses, more powerful than the effort of impatient strivers, is the tacit understanding to play the game. And this is proof against all the provocations of political passion. Of course it may be carried too far. One of the young men who come to stay with me is about to give up his job as private secretary to the chief Conservative Whip, because, as one of the younger Tories, he passionately believes in the need for certain changes that are anathema to the orthodox party-man. He is a relative of my wife's, and always spends his holidays here. Things seem to be coming to a head, for his family are taking very badly his wish to give up an assured parliamentary career, and he seems also to have some acute, private trouble; that is only a guess on my part, for Pat—his name is Pat Dunmore—never says very much. As a contrast, the son of my former assistant is coming. He is now curator of one of the scientific museums in London, a charming young fellow. I can talk shop with him, for he wants to go out to India, to work in my son's institute. His name is Bertrand Deane. He is a typical jack of all trades and a born master of ceremonies; he takes off my hands the job of amusing my little house-party. Such things come quite natural to him and he never needs any help. I shall be especially grateful to him this summer, for I have never wanted so much time to myself as I do now!

Now it is late afternoon—another wonderful, golden afternoon like yesterday. My thoughts have been with you every minute. Whom have you been talking to? Whom did you lunch with? How did the lecture go? In my mood of convalescence, I am still fairly resigned, and I shall keep at arm's length a little longer all that could pluck me out of the happy contentment left by your visit of yesterday and your letter of this morning! But I know it cannot go on much longer. The strong wind will blow from heaven again, and pile the water into great waves that will surge on their shoreless way beneath the stars. Monica, there will be no one to overhear us when I listen to your voice to-night. It will speak to me direct, here beside my pillow. You can speak quite softly. You will be in your room and I shall tell you clearly and simply, tenderly and urgently, as I feel it now: "I love you. I love you!" It comes over me again and again, in the midst of all the other things I have to tell you, in the midst of my thoughts, with a hot, breathless, wonderful distress: "I love you." I have just said it to myself under my breath, with clenched teeth, and I had to grip the arms of my chair with both hands, as though I would wrench them off. I cannot read your letters as I used to; I try to find in them the sound your voice had yesterday, when we two were alone here in the green, bosky stillness of the garden. The arrow! What splendid allegories were those old legends! The arrow, which the invisible god released from his bent bow, to pierce the very centre of men's hearts! I can feel it; it is new and very tough—it has wounded me and the shaft is quivering still! A few days ago I could still read that short sentence in your letter: "If you had been there this evening, I should simply have kissed you"—I cannot read it now. Now, I have to shut my eyes and cling to the chair with both hands. You could not "simply" kiss me to-day, Monica!

I am sending off this letter so that it will reach you after we have spoken on the telephone. Otherwise I could not bear



it this evening. Have a good rest and sleep soundly. Look across the lake again at Mont Blanc. I shall be doing the same—all the evening. God bless you! God bless you!

BEN

CARLTON HOTEL,

*Tuesday, May 20, 1930*

And now, Ben, I see I have disappointed you about that telephone call. When I came in just now I found your letter, and a message from the porter, saying that you had rung me up. And now I know that you were looking forward to my telephoning. If I had realized that you would be waiting—in spite of my warning that I am so inexpressive on the telephone—I should certainly have rung you up, although I came back to the hotel literally only for a quarter of an hour to change my frock. And now it is long past midnight.

Your heavenly lilac is standing in the window against the dark-blue background of the night. Guy brought it, I gather from an envelope which was pushed under the vase:

“I have got fifty chicks. Do come and see them.”

What a dear fellow! Thank him from me. I am looking forward to seeing his one-day-old chicks—they are so much more real and sensible than anything the “big ones” in the world accomplish.

And your letter, Ben. I really ought to scold you for your pious fraud about the ten minutes allowed by the doctor. I shall have to see to-morrow whether I can grant you absolution—with special reference to the use you made of the last ten minutes.

But I cannot come till tea-time. I am lunching in town with one of the lecturers—a Frenchman—whose lectures cover much the same ground as mine. He attended my lecture yesterday. We want to arrange not to overlap, and this we must do to-day, because we have already reached the critical point. We have agreed to attend each other's lectures regularly.

I should have done so in any case. I intend to hear as many of the other lectures as possible. Not only for the sake of the continuity of the whole course, but on grounds of personal interest. I hope to get away soon after four. Will you send the car for me as soon as you have had your rest? I shall not need it in the morning. Monsieur Perrier lives out here at Prégny and will call for me.

But now I must write to you a little longer. "In such a night"—apart from all this, it was a very full day. I feel as if the whole of Geneva, with all its different atmospheric essences and components and its remarkable problems, had taken up its abode in me. It is all very exciting and I have not done with it yet. Driving back to the hotel, I made up my mind to write all my impressions to my brother. But with your letter in front of me, I can write to no one but you, Ben. Probably, even without your letter, the force of these unique and pregnant hours would have swept me away like a cataract to Le Pré aux Mélézes. I cannot swim against the current. Everything is phantom-like and very far away, except your divan against the grey-green, satiny background of the cedar and—ah! why should I not confess it?—the inexpressibly haunting outline of your forehead and your closed eyes, on which I long to press a good-night kiss. *Voilà!* Quite simply? Yes, I think so. But in any case we two are, I know, people of "infinite daring."

Shall I really—just to fill up your morning and to leave our afternoon free—tell you something about lectures, people and conversations? You asked about these things and I am simply brimming over with them. You must promise to lay aside these papers the moment I begin to be no longer "*plaisir*," but "*d'autant plus fatigante*." But first, my beloved friend, let me tell you one thing. Such an indescribable feeling of confidence and inspiration emanated from that "secret orchard" in the background, that the whole day was fraught with it. My mind is so vigorously receptive towards all external things and yet so gloriously independent of them all.

I feel as if no ill could befall me and am conscious of the *vent propice* in all my sails. I might have felt a little nervous on unfamiliar ground. Not that it is really strange to me, but I always require some time in which to acclimatize myself psychologically. There is always that burden, which we bring with us from home; we suffer in every nerve from that vast and painful sense of embarrassment in our relations to the world in general, which has been imposed on us; the feeling that there is nothing to be done with us because we have been pushed on to the wrong track . . . I know that there is no need to explain this to you. . . . It is so liable to destroy one's candour and to drive one into that state of mutual suspicion, which sometimes one feels permeating all manifestations of good will. I find it so difficult to adopt an attitude which has to be studied or calculated. With such a handicap I cannot get into my stride and fall terribly far below my own standard. And the language is another difficulty. One must be able to speak a language as if in a kind of somnambulism, and then the words come of themselves.

Well—and now I find myself in just such a trance-like state, Ben, when everything goes of its own accord. It is as if I had suddenly found the key to all that is best and most receptive in this *esprit de Genève*—or should one say *cœur*? Has Geneva indeed a heart? Be that as it may—the key is your brotherly sympathy, so unconstrained, so understanding, so unremitting; it tones up the whole atmosphere and gives it a bloom like that of the May night which is flooding my room. In the lecture hall I felt your influence surrounding me like the protective care of the master of the house—"father," if you like, but only in the sense of the charming poem you quoted. I have never been so certain beforehand, so completely convinced, that I should get in touch with my audience. I knew at once that I had succeeded in this, and yet this gathering, though mainly composed of students, included persons differing very widely in age, origin and education. The subject, "Social policy applied to the economic crisis,"

considered in its international bearings, is specially well adapted to illustrate the insane condition of the world and of our community of destiny. Such a subject, just because it is so wide, is in danger of becoming too abstract and one may be choked with quanta.

But if, in one's inmost being, one is wafted along by a *vent propice*, then somehow or other the creative heart plays its part, and that can do no harm even to the question of national economics. One begins to see spirits, and rows of figures become flesh and blood and hopes and tears.

At the debate this afternoon, the opening speaker, a young American student, began by saying:

"Now, fellows, I think we all realized this morning what damned antiquated futile stuff they gave us at our Universities under the name of Economics."—They are perfectly right. We understood each other splendidly. I had not the heart to damp their ardent radicalism by reminding them of the stress of circumstances. But that will come.

Luncheon with one of our German officials of the League, Dr. v. B. Do you know him? To these small circles of League officials one might really apply the term "*cœur de Genève*." Their task creates in them a quite special sense of *esprit de corps* and good fellowship. They feel that they are fighting forces under the white flag. A sound and promising mixture of idealism and practical sense is acquired by them, here on this stage, where the drama of the Powers is enacted. Perhaps idealism is not the right word; it seems to imply the opposite of realism. And I really mean it in a different sense: they bring to their work faith and determination, and it is almost surprising, and certainly very reassuring, to find that scepticism has not mastered them during this last decade, as indeed it has not. It seems to me as if this were the vital and healthy part of the thing itself, from which, almost without the desire and consent of individual collaborators, a convincing force emanates. Doubtless one has to reckon with ambition, jealousy, tension, but that is inevitable and we need not dwell on it.

But the *Co-opération* is in itself something positive, and the stronger the tension which it relieves, the clearer is the proof of its effectiveness to those associated with it. From this tension between vital interests in the background springs a curious kind of solidarity and mutual understanding, a consciousness of a common destiny, comparable, perhaps, to the secret sense of tragedy felt by men engaged in building a cathedral. They know that they can never hope to see their work completed, that indeed it may be fated never to be completed, and yet they must needs set their hand to it. For all that. . . . At the same time one is aware of the danger that all this may be watered down to the pleasant urbanity of an exclusive international club. It seems to me that what it requires now and then is the onslaught of a belligerent puritanism, "terribly in earnest"—some such force as Frithjof Nansen. Otherwise the circle will tend to become too refined—morally, I mean, and almost unconsciously it will let itself drift away, until it loses touch with the dreadful misery of the world.

Forgive me, Ben. This has become a wearisome monologue. What possesses me to inflict on you these conjectures of mine, inspired by my impressions of things here—simply for the sake of making them clear myself, instead of writing of what concerns you—you and me? Perhaps it concerns us that the shaft of the Plough stands almost vertical on the horizon. It is nearly morning. I will ring up early, before I go to the lectures, because I know it gives you pleasure. To me there is something insuperably repulsive about a telephone receiver, with its suggestion of a surgical appliance. Here in the hotel it actually smells of disinfectants and it always reminds me of a stethoscope. I cannot make pretty speeches into a telephone. It would be like dictating a letter to you to a typist. But do it I will. That is to say, I will ring you up.

The morning will soon pass. And then—I must give you a kiss, beloved elder brother. Simple or not simple.

Your MONICA

*Forenoon, Tuesday, May 20, 1930*

For some time I have been enjoying the early morning sunshine at my window—for you are coming to-day!—and now your letter, written this morning, has been brought to me, and at the same time the tantalizing news that you telephoned. They take the telephone away from me at night by doctor's orders. Last night I insisted on keeping it till ten o'clock, but I had to give it up then. They said that as I was getting on so well, I had no need to fear that you might not come. I am doing all sorts of things to steady down the great, joyous restlessness of waiting. The doctor—bless his heart!—has given strict orders that there must be no excitement. I have been down in the garden, which is fresh with dew and filled with bird-song. Is there any other sound that expresses so completely the simple joy of living, the faith of living creatures? Every spring I am astonished afresh by the entrancing, overwhelming music which the dawn releases; it is so direct, so expressive, so joyous, so wholehearted, that just to listen to it is to grow young again. I have not yet progressed beyond a childish wonder at these manifestations of life which we perceive but do not understand. These bird-calls, shrill, fervent, jubilant, have notes which seem to give a clear reply to our confused human questionings. It is as though they knew more than we. Perhaps they do.

I am holding your letter in my hand, and its clear, pleasing, generous writing is engraven upon my heart. You have recreated for me all the fullness of your first day's work; I have lived through it all with you. Young MacAlister, who is cleverly keeping up Guy's Latin by oral teaching, told me this morning how much he had enjoyed your lecture. He will be in your audience again to-day. I feel rather out in the cold, and a bit sorry for myself. Nothing would have interested me more than the subject you are lecturing on. But, God be praised, we have only just begun. Of course I have also given some thought to the question of whether it is not gross selfishness on my part to expect you to spend the afternoon

with me, instead of having a good rest after the concentrated effort of the morning. But you will rest here, will you not? I cannot kidnap you and carry you far away as I should like to do. I wanted to show you the little reading-room up in the tower and the beautiful view over the country where, before you came, I used often to wander deep in thought. But I must stay downstairs awhile.

It is a little close, and great, motionless masses of cloud are hanging over the lake, in the corner whence the thunder always blows up. Perhaps we shall have some rain this afternoon, and I shall be able to keep you in my yellow room, where there is so infinitely much to show you. I almost wish it would. Outside in the garden I shall have to share you with the spring and the buds and the scents and all the living things around us. Everything in a room is so beautifully separate and shut in. I have put all sorts of things aside for you to see: the Indian photographs from Nanga Parbat, the "Roof of the World," and, above all, the Japanese pastels. I have a few paintings of the sort that can still be found in the interior of the country, the work of unknown artists, sometimes humble artisans, which would cause a sensation in Europe. The artists remain quite obscure and preserve an incomparable tenderness and humility. It is one of the most remarkable countries in the world. How significant—for us Europeans!—that Japan should have come to the conclusion that its incomparable artistry could only be demonstrated to the Western world by the roundabout path of a slavish, materialistic imitation of European efficiency in civil and military affairs. This dawned on me once at the house of a Scotch friend, when the military attaché to the Japanese Embassy in London said rather bitterly: "We had been creating works of art for centuries and they called us barbarians; now we have killed a hundred thousand Russians and they call us civilized."

This letter is to be handed to you when you go to lunch. It must not be a long letter, but I do want to be in your

thoughts, Monica, for a few minutes. I am filling my room with flowers, the hall outside is full of the scent of verbenas. I want it all to look so festive. They say that at moments of extreme tension one's whole life passes before one's eyes. This morning I felt as though all the past were present before me, as though I were experiencing all its phases, surveying simultaneously all the roads I have traversed, as though I were looking down upon it all from some soaring vantage-point. I have looked forward to your coming with such immeasurable happiness that now I am quite calm, quite collected. As though nature were helping me with soothingly diverting pictures to overcome the strain of waiting. I must not assume that, in the midst of all your work, all your new impressions, you have had time to think of my house and of me. But now, for one minute, I wish you to be aware of how wholeheartedly and joyously I am waiting for you!

BEN

CARLTON HOTEL,

*Evening, Tuesday, May 20, 1930*

BEN, MY FRIEND, AND—EVERYTHING ELSE,

The car is just turning the corner into the high road, on its way back to you. But I feel that I must linger yet awhile with you. I can still see you standing there in the twilight and the rain by the door of the car, which you had just closed. The afternoon was too much for you. And something that I did was wrong. It was not only that we crowded too much into this one afternoon and that I stayed too long. You refused to let me go, but I ought to have insisted. And yet all the time I had the feeling that there was still something that I could do for you, but I could not think what it was.

I hope, Ben, I hope that you have at last gone to lie down on your divan and that you are resting. I am watching your face to see if that drawn look, which frightened me just now, is disappearing—that expression of extreme strain, from which



you are still suffering. It affected me all the more painfully because to-day your house and workroom had afforded me a clearer insight into your great, audacious, far-spread life; the daring and patience which you combined in your career as a research worker, the fearlessness, the physical elasticity, and the docile submission of the intellectual man to the tediousness of small but genuine happenings. It seems to me that there is nothing of which the world stands in greater need than this serene, far-seeing, mature virility, together with the firm and careful hand. I am quite ingenuously proud of you, Ben.

But now, in the gathering darkness, I should like to sit beside you and talk of trivial, unimportant things, which drift towards us like that veil of May rain, and are gone in a moment, leaving behind only an impression of refreshing coolness. Just obvious, familiar, very human things; such as people talk about who know that they have a long, long time—an immeasurably long time—before them; who know that the boundless trust they repose in each other will so penetrate their whole existence that it will permeate the merest trifles, just as mighty nature manifests itself with delicate airiness in all those minute creatures, with which your research work is concerned. Nature is a “gentle man”—even as you are, Ben.

I might, for instance, tell you all about the aubretias in their stone pots on our roof-garden, which have just finished flowering. I put the last blossom between the pages of my diary. Here it is. Laugh at me if you like, but treat it tenderly. Or I could tell you of all the discoveries I have made about the print of the pomegranate flower. This is actually the first time it has not come with me on my travels, tucked into the straps inside my trunk, and now I am almost sorry not to have brought it. I have always to mitigate the impersonal world of sleeping-cars and hotel bedrooms with some reminder of the intimacy of home. Otherwise, I feel myself lost and phantom-like. Or I might talk to you, Ben, about that hand of yours, so muscular and at the same time so considerate,

so intelligent. Ah, there are a thousand and one stories I could find to tell, without the slightest effort—day after day, morning, noon and night. With what deep-breathing ecstasy one feels that there are infinite spaces ready to open before us. One has the sense of vast realms allotted to one—just as the Salève and Les Voirons yonder, still looming faintly through the mist, proclaim in every line that they are part of an invisible group of mighty mountains.

And I think, too, that to-night, Ben, I must talk to you a little about our love.

I shall not be able to come to-morrow, or the next day, because I shall be hard at work again. The questions my audience put to me require so much supplementing. I had to telegraph for more material, and all to-day I have had a thick packet of papers lying on my table. When I think of the concentration I shall have to devote to them, I clench my hands involuntarily. But to-night I have pushed the ugly grey bundle into a cupboard and in its place I have set your laburnum, which, still wet with rain, you put into the car for me. Just this one evening I will indulge myself with that dream of infinite spaces. Everything else vanishes into the invisible and there remains only the vast prospect of our destiny.

I know now, Ben, where it was that I failed you this afternoon. Let me say just once, in words as frank and fearless as the notes of birds that are wafted over the lake: I love you. How wonderful it would be if I could call it across to you, like that dauntless blackbird yonder on the topmost branch of the larch. Why is it that one is so shy of the direct word and hides behind symbols and images? Is it that we fear to let Fate into the secret, and thus burst open the sluice-gates which hold back the gathering floods? For my part, I know Fate only too well!

It is different when boys and girls give unto each other their light hearts, before life has well begun. They are like young fountains, playing together.

Do you ever stand on the little iron bridge by the lock, which dams up all the waters of the lake? When the waters are released, they lose their rippling playfulness and become a single smooth glassy sheet. Not one drop is its own master. All the drops are merged together in that tremendous torrent, through the might of the massed waters in their headlong rush.

Now I understand that saying: *Amor fati*.

This afternoon I felt I must kiss you the moment I arrived, because I was so happy. But when I push open the flood-gates, I would fain clasp your large, calm hand—father, brother, anything.

M.

*Morning, Wednesday, May 21, 1930*

BELOVED! BELOVED!

Again the soft, tender jubilation of bird-voices outside the window, like the melody of my own heart. But to-day it is stronger and more rapturous than ever before; in this invisible, thousand-voiced choir swells the sweet sap rising in all the leaves and flowers. I have done all you wished, Monica. What else could I do? I have lain for hours outstretched on my bed as though under the swell of heaving waters. Dark, wonderful, timeless happiness in which I have slept for eternities! I have been in the great spaces, the spaces which "open before us," as you say in your letter. I have dreamed the dream of infinite space. It was you who gave me that phrase, that unfathomable phrase—and with it I set out upon my dream as though upon a voyage into a land of blissful promise. If I could only tell you, if I could ever hope to tell you, what it was to me when you stood here at my side, and gave me with your eyes and lips that kiss. It was more beautiful than I could have conceived in my most audacious dreams—so light, so close, so tender. From that touch, from that second of mutual contact—you let me put my lips to your

forehead, your temples—I have drunk eternal life. I think I can never die now. If to live is to be conscious of one's own being with ultimate clearness, I have the feeling that this consciousness in me can never be extinguished. Everything is illumined to the farthest corner. The deep, glad surprise of that moment trembled through the afternoon and all the rest of the day. Everything was dipped in that miraculous drunkenness, every word, every look. I could not loose my eyes from yours and it cost me an effort to control my hands. Yes, all the dams were broken in that one second, all the flood-gates rapturously opened. I felt with a deep joy that it was you who shaped that afternoon, who led us both down those enchanted hours, that nothing was neglected, nothing forgotten, in the unspeakable happiness that engulfed me, that everything was included, everything drunk to the last drain as I had planned and prepared. How deep was my satisfaction to be thus gently and wisely guided. All that spoke to me out of your being, out of your immediate self, in those long, untroubled hours was so delightful. A stream of new strength poured into me, of deep, new confidence. As I walked beside you I scarcely knew my own garden, my own room, all was so wonderfully changed, so wonderfully different! How quickly you noticed this! And when you did so, a warm, tender note came into your voice, a full lilting note that touched my heart. It was the 'cello-string! When you bent over the bowl of primroses and put your face into their cool, soft petals for a moment, I felt my heart fill with tenderness as with wine. I knew no longer what I was doing; only looked at you. And when you raised your head and met my eyes, a faint wave of warmth, like a blush, passed over your forehead. Yes, you blushed, Monica—you were struck for a moment to the heart by the speechless ardour of my look. When we walked across the grass to that excited boy and his chickens, our breathing, after those moments of unspeakable tension, was deep and delightful. You felt that too, beloved! You felt it! And we walked quickly, with springy steps, side by side,

and showed each other everything, sharing it all. We were brother and sister, conscious of that kinship of blood and spirit to the very roots of our being. Then, when we had to race back to the house out of the rain with the boy between us, and he ducked, shyly happy, under our linked arms to escape the falling drops—he has in his heart a great, dumb veneration for you, perhaps the first in his life—we were as purely happy, as turbulently glad, as only children can be! When the thunder-clouds came up it grew quite dark, and I saw by the light of the lamp the rich, warm, coppery tone in your hair that so enraptures me. I saw that your eyes have the same lively, deep-brown colour, the same fiery play of lights, gold and russet and topaz. I showed you so many things, I piled up all my treasures between us, because by then I was scarcely master of myself. I had to take hold of something, to look at something with intense concentration, because my eyes wanted to see nothing but you, my hands to hold nothing but your hands. In the midst of our talk—what a wonderful talk it was!—when you moved away to take a closer look at that picture of the sunflowers, the load of emotion so overwhelmed me that I had to put both hands to my head. It was not fatigue. You knew that, did you not? But you came and stood for one enchanting second by my chair, a little uncertain and full of anxious, sisterly solicitude. The late afternoon died slowly, like the reverberance of notes trembling in the air when the music has ceased. At that minute, we concluded the hours we had spent together, shut our hearts on them, as one shuts a book one loves, cautiously, guardedly, to open it soon again. Yes, it was exhaustion I felt, but it was wonderful; life had offered me, as in a cup, its most delectable elixir, and I had drunk it to the last drop. It will be filled again. It will always be filled when you are with me. And you will never be far away, even when I am quite alone.

I feel that the enforced calm of these days is necessary and good. Days of self-communion. I shall “potter about”—as we say in England to describe that dawdling, meditative

activity—in the garden, among the flowering shrubs of the borders, picking off dead leaves, loosening the soil, bringing air and light to the young shoots. After the rain, which we needed, the soil will work well. In a fortnight my good fellow gardener, Constance Endicott, is coming. We two talk garden-lore to each other nearly all the time, and find that that is pretty well all we need. In England we have an idea that one does not really know another person till one has watched him at work in his garden, laying out and planning, tending and supervising his plants. Some people can never do it; indeed, never attempt it, even when they have a garden. And that too is an expression of their personality, and a very honest one, for there are other ways of self-realization. But in a garden certain little traits of character show themselves unmistakably. Constance approaches her gardening as a pure amateur; she despises my botanical terminology, calls everything by its christian name, as it were, handles flowers and plants like children and young animals, with a gentle sureness of touch that never fails. What she plants always grows and thrives. "I know nothing except that the things grow," she says complacently. You ought to see her sitting at her ease in a basket-chair, with her blue gardening apron round her, beside the unruly, autumnal borders. She takes in her lap a huge mass of roots, settles it comfortably as though it were a big dog whose coat she was going to clip or a fat little boy whose finger-nails needed attention; then she takes her sharp little penknife and divides with unfailing instinct the tubercles she is going to plant out separately. She never injures the vital parts, saves all essential rootlets, but slashes vigorously away all that is coarse, woody and superfluous; and all the time she chatters with delicious volubility about the politics and shortcomings of the League. She shuffles along the border in her basket-chair, leaving everything, as she passes, well-arranged, tidy and well-bedded, ready for next spring. With the same unfailing eye for essentials, she once talked to me enthusiastically of her first meeting with you. You must tell

me about it yourself. As the pomegranate blossom has been left behind, I have been rummaging appreciatively among the Japanese engravings which I have not yet shown you. There are still a few. Sooner or later they will all find their way to you, welcome messengers, should a mere letter seem to me inadequate to remind you of my existence. I think the one showing the shaft of sunshine in the eye of a royal tiger behind thin bamboo stems is the best. First you see the light, then the eye, golden and glassy, then the whole animal relaxed in the self-forgetful ease of complete security. It was one of my first real impressions of the way the old Japanese artists represented animals and it has never lost its effect on me. That young tiger, comprehended by a master's eye in a fleeting moment of satiety and good temper, escapes from the spell of fear and frightfulness. There it lies, blinking in the green dusk behind a delicate lattice of dense, young shoots, its big, broad, feline face wearing the almost childish gravity one sees sometimes in young animals. I had shot my first tiger long before, a grim, mangy old man-eater, and when that picture came into my hands I had a profound dislike for the whole species. It is hard to escape such a feeling in India, where every year a few thousand jungle postmen alone, a splendid type of man for whom I have the greatest respect, fall victims to the tiger. But since I saw the look in that young tiger's eye I have had certain inhibitions to overcome, even when hunting. You see the effect of getting to know one's enemy.

*Evening*

To-day has been so peaceful. It has smelt so sweet of rain and damp earth. And I have enjoyed writing this letter in the intervals of various soothing activities. Now the doctor is coming to dinner and perhaps the padre of the English Church here. I have asked him to prepare Guy for confirmation. It is still a little early for the boy, but as he is not allowed

to do any lessons that would strain his eyes, Mr. Morrison has agreed to prepare him in a rather roundabout way, telling him of Jerusalem and Palestine, which he knows well, and of Rome, where he was in charge of the English church. He has written an entertaining book for children on the holy places of early Christianity, and he seems to enjoy devoting some time to the boy. The company of these two men will fill up my evening very pleasantly. I must not think too much of yesterday, nor of to-morrow, nor the day after. I must play the host with full lighting and all eyes upon me. It does me good. But first I must cut you a big bunch of irises (*iris germanica*). All this will reach you this evening.

BEN

*Friday morning, May 23, 1930*

The two days' enforced idleness are over. May I go with you to your lecture? Guy will ride as far as your hotel this morning and bring me an answer. Let me know what time you want the car.

B.

*Early morning, Friday, May 23, 1930*

Yes. No. Yes. Why, of course you must come to my lecture, Ben. I had already—I nearly wrote—made up my mind to it. But to put it more accurately, when I was preparing the lectures at home, I used to picture you to myself among my audience. At that time I was looking forward to it, quite simply and unreservedly, with perhaps the least little touch of stage fright, such as one feels with regard to people whose opinion one values specially. "Stage fright!" The word reduces that tiny qualm of apprehension to its former insignificance, in comparison with the question which suddenly confronts me: How am I ever to get over the fact that you will be sitting there, Ben, in one of the rows, between Monsieur



Delacroix, student from Grenoble, and Ram Pershad of Poona, or Erik Palmgren? It is no longer such a simple matter. I am in touch with my audience—such at least is my impression—and can set certain strings vibrating. But I cannot at the same time address myself to you, Ben (and what is more, in French). Yet how is it possible for me not to do so if you are there? It will be like interference from a more powerful transmitter. The antennae, you know! But the more I realize this, the more difficult it becomes. Enough of this. Certainly, Ben, you must come. I ought to be able to reconcile all this, and perhaps it will result in something very beautiful. Who knows whether I have not already addressed you in my lectures, without being conscious of it? I told you how everything that was inspiring in the atmosphere of the lecture hall was connected with Le Pré aux Mèlèzes. But visible presence is different from invisible presence. Very different, I fancy. But in spite of this, you must come. What makes it easier, is that I am approaching a point at which my subject takes a real hold of me. It may even be important for me to be able to feel that I am speaking to you, and gazing into your clear eyes, with their warm, fraternal sympathy. So I'll risk it.

You will call for me at nine-thirty, won't you?

In haste. I have kept Guy waiting too long already.

M.

*Afternoon, May 23, 1930*

BELOVED FRIEND,

It was lovely to have you there. Lovely, without a shade of reserve. I hasten to tell you so, because, with Monsieur Perrier in the car, no private conversation was possible, and to-morrow we shall have no opportunity for talking to each other. I had a very pleasant time, by the way, at the Perriers' this morning. He lives in Paris and has found summer quarters for his family in a modest little country cottage. I like these French officials. Their salaries are very small

and yet a great deal is expected of them, both as regards quantity and quality. In an unassuming way, they are as cultured as they are industrious, and they are remarkably intelligent and well informed. And yet they handle things with such a light touch, just as their wives do in their charming little homes. It is true that one cannot get them to take a close and objective view of our own situation, nor, for that matter, of the tremendous tension that exists in the condition of the world in general. Intellectually no doubt they realize it, but the problems do not affect them with anything like the same seriousness as they do industrial nations. The fact that they have at the present moment no great financial experts is perhaps no mere coincidence. And that was why Monsieur Perrier did not in the least understand what I was concerned with to-day—namely to show that social policy is no longer effective as a State-directed means of delivering an unplanned economy from the control of the individual. It is because the fundamental error of the system, which was to treat human beings merely as means of production, instead of recognizing that they possessed an economic sense, has assumed such gigantic proportions that such action is no longer adequate. What comes next, to be sure, is at present pure hypothesis: to build up the economic system anew with a different purpose in view, as a means of guaranteeing intelligent activity and a worthy attitude towards life in healthy nations. To-day we are trying by purely artificial means, such as protective tariffs, import restrictions and protection of labour, to keep a wrong system half alive, while we ought to be reconstructing from the beginning, from actual experience, that which a whole century has misdirected, wasted and abused. In asserting this to-day, one is necessarily transcending the bounds of actual knowledge and entering the sphere of faith and will, and it is a hazardous enterprise to point out these paths. In the sight of the purely analytically, purely critically, if you like, purely scientifically minded, such an attempt is swiftly condemned. It seems to me as if whatever we do

nowadays were in defence of some one portion of an untenable whole. Blind, despairing and utterly futile. The futility of it can indeed be scientifically proved. But in order to indicate at least the starting-point of the new system, what is required is not the expert, but the sensitive antennae, and quite a different kind of receptiveness. And that was why, beloved friend, I felt all the happier, all the more confident, because of your presence. It did not distract me to steal a glance at you now and then. On the contrary, when I was dealing with this part of my subject, I could hear what you call "the 'cello-string" vibrating quite of its own accord, as, surely, it has an intrinsic right to do.

You will certainly be horrified at the zeal which has made me repeat a long lecture in a letter. But no, after all, I do not think you will be horrified. You will understand just what it is that is stirring my heart—I know that. The secret and brotherly pressure of your hand in the car told me so, and I thank you, Ben, that you are ready to tread this path, too, with me and to include in our "anything to thee" comradeship the essential task of my life.

Your happy comrade,

MONICA

*Evening, Friday, May 23, 1930*

I sent the car back and have been wandering about for the last hour, so absorbed was I in my impressions of your lecture, so immersed in the whole atmosphere of this morning. I wanted passionately to go on speaking to you about it. But your French colleague was there—a nice fellow!—and nothing remained for me but polite self-effacement. All the more tumultuous were my feelings! I have just got home after tramping all the way over Prégny hill—what a grand view that is across the lake from the top of La Fenêtre, and what a splendid name for the place where the Count de Sellon and his Peace Society made their brave and shrewdly planned

attempt. This town of Geneva has been the stage of so much history; it was all so real and near to me to-day, I was so struck by the remarkable fact that again and again through the centuries the thoughts of Europe have been thought out here by this lake. With my mind's eye I saw the group of young, vital listeners at your lecture this morning, and I felt again the deep and genuine excitement aroused in an audience by a mental experience. It can unite them with a powerful bond. The questions and answers at the end, the many types of young European, their complete seriousness in face of a common task, a common problem, posed by the ghastly conditions of our post-War world, and your figure in the midst of them, as they sat there, electrified by the vitality of your words, the boldness and clarity of your ideas—all this I can still feel and see. But apart from purely intellectual profit, I derived also a sudden realization that the problems that have lived a ghostly, menacing existence in all our minds, crippling and burdening us for years, suddenly took on a different appearance, became more organic, more identifiable, more vulnerable to human action, and therefore less hopeless. I realized that we were feeling—many of us for the first time—the direct impact of the results of a woman's intellectual effort, that we were looking at a picture of the world situation which no man had drawn for us, looking from a fresh viewpoint at ways and means of improving or eradicating seemingly hopeless conditions. The ideas were different from those we had heard a thousand times before; they arose from a different level of perception and intuition. And this realization was communicated to us with so much spontaneous force, with such an original explanation of the sources of error which lie at the root of our problems, with an estimate of possibilities scarcely before glimpsed and never practically considered; and as a result dark corners were lighted up, new ideas were not only heard, but grasped by us all, through the vital force of a manner of thought that draws nourishment from its own roots and ripens the fruits of knowledge with its own kindling

warmth. That was what we felt, and it confirmed what I have always instinctively held, viz. that the one-sided, masculine conception of life has led us to a sort of intellectual glacier. We know everything, and yet we know nothing of the real sources of life which alone can nourish the furthest roots, mental and physical. The woman's way of thinking, the opening up by the woman of those hidden but eternal forces of renewal, the drinking of the waters of life, by which her own roots are set—that is what we need, that is what the world we have formed and de-formed needs more than daily bread. Most of us fail to see it, including the great mass of women, shaped and educated by and for a masculine world. The blind leading the blind! Is it not one of those absurd tragedies so common to-day, that we men rarely have an opportunity of discussing matters with a thoughtful woman who has mastered the whole extent of a difficult subject, and yet we stumble from one costly blunder to the next, imperilling the vital interests of the present world-situation? Is it not an unjustifiable waste of strength, an unparalleled squandering of precious knowledge when, God knows, we have nothing left to squander, nothing to waste! But we are stricken with blindness, we are—too many of us—believers in ruin. And yet not all. We are seeking, and the honest ones among us will admit it, just that feminine strength which refuses ruin with all the passion of unspoiled nature, just that strength that wells up in her indestructibly. And when for once it is communicated to us in all its fullness, you know, Monica, what it can work in us!

This morning I happened to read Briand's "Europe Memorandum" about which all Geneva is talking, and I asked myself how it comes about that as soon as these post-War statesmen seem to be grasping a great historical task, all the life goes out of it. I cannot believe that this happens to us because we are "idealists" and lack the courage to face what is really possible—as I believe your Bismarck says. What then is "possible"? Surely that depends on the strength of those

who make history. In the English military colleges the capture of the Heights of Spichern in the war of '70-'71, used to be quoted as an example. A reservist was asked the question, "How was it possible?" To which he replied, "Oh, it wasn't possible, but we managed it just the same." I do not see why the politicians should not understand the strategic significance of this story, but they will never "manage it" as long as they uphold the treaties of 1919. It is a great disappointment to find that this memorandum, for the reason I have just given, is again an unnecessary exercise in squaring the circle. Futile—everyone knows it to be so in advance. And government after government will make grave pronouncements and a masquerade of sham negotiations will pass across this mart of political futilities; one wonders which would be more suitable—a funeral march or the music of a carnival. Who will arouse the storm that will sweep that scrap of paper into the lake? Down there, in the Council of the League, the storms that come from the hearts of the nations are admitted only through the ventilators.

But there was something of that storm in your words, Monica. The only consolation I take home with me to-day is a handshake; to-morrow I shall spend the whole day without you, but I have within me such a strong, such a deep and joyous echo of your personality that I am richer than ever before. I realize that that force which, now that I know it, I must call love, bursts out not only from the immeasurable depths, the "abysses of the soul"—as I think Ricarda Huch says—but perhaps with even greater strength from the clearest and most conscious regions of thought. Each time I meet you I realize more fully that what I receive through you, through your existence just as you are, is the ultimate fulfilment of being, final self-knowledge, the confirmation of the deepest and most secret hopes of my own mind. Now that I have you I have at last become myself. I ought not to say "have," Monica, and yet it is the only word that adequately expresses my sense of being filled with you. Is it not "having"

to encompass the most precious living creature with all the alertness of one's being, with all one's senses, one's capacity for perception? It is not a narrow, exclusive, jealous embrace—though I well know what jealousy is since I have you, Monica—it takes in the whole world of your freedom, the whole scope of your most personal, individual life. And it embraces all this as the very centre of all life. Now at last I know just where I stand, and act in true relationship to all about me. Now at last I know what I am seeking; I see the veins of silver quartz shining in the strange shafts of the soul. Now I must console myself by devising something for the day after to-morrow. You will not be lecturing, so come with me. Let us have a long ride in the early morning and breakfast somewhere in the country. I know so many lovely spots and feel such a wild impatience to view them all with you, to look from afar over this "eternal landscape" as you say in one of your early letters! With you! Can you come? The Maréchal Niel roses are hardly out yet, but that is why I am sending them. There is nothing finer than these buds, these leaves, this scent. They are the expression of a personality—and for me they are in form and scent the essence of the most beautiful and deeply beloved woman.

YOUR B.

CARLTON HOTEL,  
*Evening, May 23, 1930*

I cannot tell you, dear friend, in a few hastily written words, how delighted I was with your letter about your philosophical walk. It is as if you gave me your friendship all over again, dedicating it this time to that part of my life, from which I cannot cut adrift, and which is as much my destiny and an essential part of me as my love itself. At the present day we women—as you say yourself—whose lives are devoted to this task, are fundamentally very solitary in the world. That it did not alienate you from me; that you accepted

this, too, entirely, I knew in my heart of hearts, and yet I was a little afraid. But after a lecture on the economic crisis, your Maréchal Niel roses are very reassuring.

And now I am looking forward more than I can say to my week-end with you, beloved friend, with all the exhilaration one feels after one has successfully passed through some ordeal.

But a ride, Ben . . . surely not yet! No, I refuse to ride with you. At least, not till I am sure that you have the doctor's unqualified consent. Not a reluctant concession, granted with the amiable resignation, or resigned amiability, of which I suspect him. I wish I could ask him myself, but I have no right to do so—in the eyes of the world. I find it very difficult to be firm on this point, because it is to our rides especially that I have been looking forward so boundlessly, so unspeakably. And I am afraid you may think it is because I am nervous, in case "anything should happen." It is not that at all. But the idea of your riding so soon after your accident, through these streets with their hard surface, which one cannot altogether avoid! Forgive me, but it is sheer madness. I must bribe you to give up this plan. We can do something else, anything you like. We shall have the whole day before us. Draw up another programme. That part of it I shall certainly cut out until further notice.

MONICA (which I'm afraid may come from *moneo*. In any case: *monendum te est mihi*.)

### *Postscript*

I have another suggestion to make. To-morrow my colleagues are going for a sail on the lake. As it is the week-end, only a few of them will remain on the boat for the return trip. The others will be staying over Sunday round about Glion and Vevey. From that point onwards I shall have no social duties. Could you not meet me with the car at Territet in the afternoon? We could drive up to Glion or Caux, and stay there as long as we liked. Do bring Guy with you. Tell him from me that it will be much more fun if he comes, too.



And Sunday, Ben, is the day when we carry out your programme. I am looking forward so much to our first whole day together. We might for once actually go to church in the morning and make it a real Sunday. Thanksgiving. Have we not abundant cause? It is not such a gloomy affair nowadays, as in the time of those men in their black-gowned panoply, who figure on the Reformation monument. Their God would hardly deign to accept our offering of thanks. But we won't be intimidated, will we? I think it would be lovely. I leave the choice of the church to you.

Your M.

LE PRÉ AUX MÉLÈZES, GENEVA,  
*Evening, Friday, May 23, 1930*

I am wildly delighted at your suggestion, for I treasure like a miser every hour of your company. So we are to spend a whole Saturday afternoon together, and then a whole Sunday. I am so delighted that one last, final letter must go off to you to-night. Yes, for this plan I am willing to postpone my long-awaited morning ride with you, but only till Tuesday. What do you say? The first free day you will have. I have already asked the doctor and he has readily given his permission. It confirms his favourite theory that this place has magical qualities of healing. So I shall be in Territet tomorrow (Saturday) afternoon when the boat comes in. And now that I am writing to you—my mental urge to talk is so intense that pen and ink are far too cumbersome. You must be patient again. It is the last thing I ask to-night—let me tell you of the thing that fills me. Every moment with you is wonder and devotion. I could never believe that the existence of another person could give such unspeakable satisfaction. I want to solemnize each moment silently in my heart. So violent was the happiness that filled me that I had to go down to the lake again. And there was the lovely chain of lights, the trees against the black sky. It was wonderful to

walk there in the rich, winged rhythm of a wonderful happiness.

Shall we go into the little church at Mornex on Sunday morning? It is so still and solemn there, and the panorama of the Alps almost perfect. Do you know that the first notes of "Tristan" were jotted down in the garden beside the church?

I am sending you all the flowers from the Maréchal Niels; there will be plenty more in the morning. And with those fresh roses, Monica, so much, much more for you!

BEN

CARLTON HOTEL,

*Sunday evening, May 25, 1930*

My days, beloved friend, never come to an end at their appointed time, that is to say when we part. Here on my terrace, these evening hours with their dying echoes are as essential to my days as the tides to the sea. I cannot make up my mind to our daily separation; I must hold fast to this link between us. "We shall both of us catch the 'billet-doux disease,'" Goethe once said, when he was under the same roof as Frau von Stein and yet could not help writing to her from morning till night. And there remains always something which cannot be uttered when one is face to face with the Beloved, some knowledge which must be interchanged.

I wish I could tell you all that church this morning meant to me, and yet I know that it was too solemn, too intense for words. I did not hear much of the service, because I was overwhelmed with the feeling that I was standing in the presence of God, with my whole life, as never before, because this life of mine has now become important to you. Can I let you bear the burden? Can I acquiesce? Am I sufficiently sure of the past and of the future, now that I realize that everything in my existence has power to give you joy or give you pain? I want you to know this: because my heart was

full of you, I prayed, as I have never prayed before, that the hand of God would keep me.

Good night, Ben.

LE PRÉ AUX

*Monday, May 26, 1930*

The big lime-tree down in the garden is smothered with blossoms. Every year I make it my place of refuge. Now is the time when my first guests arrive, and I have just installed Pat and Bertrand in their rooms. Then I came down here, and here I shall stay as long as I can under the blossoming lime. Luckily both the boys had immediate appointments with friends and neighbours. This wonderful, honey-coloured tree—it is quite transparent with light and scent and buzzing, summery life—is like a fairyland, and here I sit in its golden greenness and let my thoughts “follow the dream!” This quiet garden, full of shining blossoms, is very pleasant, because I am deeply absorbed in the echoes of the rich melody of the past two days. Yes, great waves of melody—there is no other way of expressing it. I have had an ocean of music in my soul since I met you last Saturday afternoon at the foot of the hill. Gracious heavens, was that the day before yesterday? That clear, sunny afternoon, and the Sunday with its infinite depth and peace, can be compared only with truly great music. My whole mind is still, as it were, lapped by great, calm waves, waves of light, pure as snow, of water, all the water of the wide lake, on which we looked down again and again, from all those peaks.

We touched as though in flight on all my favourite places. And there was nothing else to do but to walk farther and farther into that wonderful community of experience. There is such a deep tremor in my heart, I wish I could write you a letter as “soothed” and harmonious as my own feelings. The echoes are still so full and strong that no fresh yearnings can arise; the waves run smooth and full. You have seemed

deeply familiar to me from the very beginning. I could not help thinking—oh, Monica, is it too bold of me to say so?—of a fine English phrase that expresses this fully and completely: “We are in each other’s roots.” Yes, we are indissolubly connected in the very roots of our being.

You see, we who are alive to-day, scattered all over the world, still feel when we meet, in spite of all the insensate happenings of our time, a sense of relationship that springs from the remote past, and that in itself is a wonderful experience. But with me it was something more. I must tell you about it now, as I realize it fully, sitting under this wonderful, old, blossoming tree. It seems to me that the real “national” development in all countries consists of the manner in which we individuals digest the significance of our age and distil from it what will have some validity for those who live after us—that is, I take it, the only thing that matters—and then, further, what we do to mix in our own minds the results of this effort with what was in our minds before, the realities that have grown up in the course of centuries. But this development is harder perhaps in a country like Germany, which is so rich in the potentialities of development of all kinds. I felt that while you were speaking—you have told me little about yourself, but that old family on its own red clay spoke from you so clearly! It seems to me that once I told you the whole story of my life without stopping for breath, without waiting for punctuation marks. I suppose we ought not to expect to “understand each other,” for we belong to two “generations”—you are of the same generation as my son. That at least would be the usual judgment. But I saw more and more clearly, as each hour of these wonderful days went by, that everything I could look for in a human being has found shape in you; all I did not know, all the strains and emotions of those endless years of the War and after the War, all the deep unspeakable things I could not know because I had been away so long—they are here, in closest kinship with me, nearer than anything that ever happened in my life. And

more still—some people possess in greater measure those peculiar qualities which characterize their race, they incorporate and physically reveal them. You were wearing a dress, it may have been brown or it may not, but it matched your wonderful hair, and I almost told you—I just managed to keep it back at the last second—how kind it was of you to look so ravishing, Monica. It was the boy again, whom you understood so well, beloved. You were unmistakably a member of your ancient family; you were, in some ageless way, the immortal German woman, the young German woman, as she has periodically reappeared since the dawn of history, clear and unmistakable. I realized that I had always so imagined her in movement and expression. I saw that as a young girl you must have been her purest incarnation, incarnation of the person who was our sister through all the vicissitudes of the old fairy-tales, the King's daughter, to whom every conceivable adventure happens, who spins gold from straw and linen from nettles, who can be anything and everything, goose-maid and beggar-girl, foundling and guttersnipe, but always remains the King's daughter, and, if she has to sweep the snow away, finds red strawberries shining underneath it. No harm can come to her . . . ! You were sitting in the car, so precious and familiar, and I asked myself how it could happen that one's innermost and most secret dreams could take on human shape. My heart was full of solemn rejoicing. I saw the banks of this familiar lake as though for the first time, because I saw them through your eyes. This landscape came to me like a revelation; it is soaked with my love as the score of a great composition is soaked with the notes written down in it, so that the musician hears them as he turns the pages, though they be silent.

In thought I constantly go back to that Sunday afternoon on the shore, when your steamer put in and you came towards me out of the crowd, to the abrupt change from the lake-level to the giddy height of Caux terrace, the view stretching in blinding floods of light to the silvery distance. The ascent,

quicker than any car could have made it, was itself inspiring; the little carriage of the funicular railway carried us up into blue air; the pine-woods, the massive shapes of the hills fell away below us. It was physically perceptible, that soaring upward motion. How far one could see! My heart kindled with joy when we landed on the summit and I saw your eyes—beloved eyes, full of sunlight. We left everything behind us, the usual Saturday crowd, the houses, the paths, and with a rush attained the final peak, the most commanding viewpoint. How happy we were! And in the midst of our shining contentment I explained the situation with Guy. He was to have come with us; I was to have told him that it “would not be so nice without him”—but I did not do so: it was quite as nice without him, unquestionably. And besides, the boy will be getting conceited if I give him such messages, and that is bad for the young. However, he had plans of his own that afternoon: he was to go to Pâquis with his friend Mathieu, the gardener, whose son works on one of the cement barges down in the harbour, and see the ships. He had been looking forward to it all the week. And so I had my precious Saturday alone with you, entirely undisturbed, with the quite incredible prospect of a whole Sunday. Oh, the light of that late afternoon in the mountains! It is always the loveliest time of the day—the clear evening when the long shadows point across the meadows, washed with golden sunshine; one’s breath comes deep and calm, everything is relaxed and chastened, and swims in a fragrance that seems not to be of this world. The firm, sweet pressure of the hand I held is like a seal upon my heart. And the things we talked of! Oh, Monica, it was music! Music alone could convey the magic of those hours, the richness, the wonderful tumult of the spirit, the unspoken questions and the gracious answers. Such experiences live only in music, and in those hours I heard the loveliest music in the world, the most beautiful there is, all the fugues, all the preludes and symphonies. I can hear them still, floods of music with all their exciting,

changing tempi—*crescendo*, *accelerando*, *ritardando*—lightly flowing, adroitly guided. It still mounts and streams in my heart in endless, bewitching variations: *andantino*, *allegro assai*, *scherzo con brio*, *adagio cantabile*! It is a good thing I have not to listen to real music in my present condition, for I could scarcely endure it. I can just bear the deep, hidden notes within myself, to which I listen here in this quiet garden, in lonely retrospect. But if the pure reality of the tones were to break in upon this magic state, if this hard self-control, which I am endeavouring to maintain, were submerged in living music, if someone were to play me one of the things I love, the *Appassionata*, some eloquent, urgent composition of Schubert that roams the universe, or some wise, delicate piece of Mozart, I should be at the end of all things!

Monica, your short letter of Sunday night—I have not yet found the strength to mention that sacred missive. It is the hidden treasure, the nameless jewel. Even now I will say no more about it. But I take your hands as I took them yesterday, up on that marvellous peak, where the grass was starred with all the blooms that grow on Alpine fields. And like a boy, happy to stand afar in the silent devotion of his heart, I kiss those hands and hold them, and my heart repeats the words that went through yours when you wrote. God bless you!

Your B.

I have just received an invitation to Lady Batten's musical At Home on Thursday, Ascension Day. She writes that I shall have the pleasure of meeting Dr. Monica Velmede, whose lectures have attracted so much attention. What fun! But music—oh, Monica—we are to have music after all! Music with you and among strangers—what will happen to me now? And yet I am looking forward to it. I only hope that whoever arranges the programme will not be too expert.

LE PRÉ AUX MÉLÈZES,

*Evening, Tuesday, May 27, 1930*

I have just been back to see the little mare, Erin; I can't keep away from her to-day. When I come she turns her head with a soft whinny which expresses so eloquently, so directly, a horse's trust: "Here you are. How good of you!" Since she carried you on her back this morning, only Erin can understand how I feel. And she does understand. My good Selim snorts over his oats, but she stands still while I am there, her ears gently twitching, quiet and attentive. She does not want to eat, but gently rubs her head against my shoulder and takes my hand between her soft, smooth, dry lips. Old Mason, my uncle's horse-breaker in Devonshire, gave me once and for all the right expression for the peculiar quality of a horse's mouth. "Like a kid glove, Master Ben," he used to say, as he put the light steel bit into a sensitive mouth. I confess, dearest friend, that I could master my unruly yearnings only by going as often as possible to the two horses, the witnesses of our wonderful ride this morning. They alone were a part of that enchantment! . . . Did you notice, Monica, this morning, when the little mare stepped out with you into the morning freshness, with what delight I took you in, you and the horse as an enchanting unit, you on horse-back as a new revelation? We had never talked much about riding, and I did not know to what extent you were at home in the world of horses. For it is a world! There are thousands of little trivial things in riding, a thousand nuances that are just a matter of taste, and taste is notoriously a thing on which people agree to differ. So that was the position, and I looked forward keenly to seeing you on a horse. There is a phrase that seems to me entirely right—I do not know who coined it—"Heaven in this world is on a horse's back." I had thought to myself: Perhaps there is still a last possibility of escape! Perhaps there is something to be saved from the great capitulation of my heart! For perhaps, perhaps, a passionate horseman cannot lose his heart completely and finally



to a person who is not in the same degree a passionate horsewoman. Thus my thoughts still played around you and the question of how you rode. There must be something she cannot do, I thought to myself quite desperately, something in the world that she does not understand and—still more important!—does not do supremely well. Perhaps she does not ride as beautifully as she speaks, writes, walks, laughs and looks. Perhaps there will be something—I almost said, God grant it!—something that I shall not like. Oh, Monica, we had been trotting for some time along the clover-fields, the little mare always a head in front of Selim—he likes that, it always makes him frisky and you can see how much he enjoys it—and I was still fighting back the words that came to my lips, that Fate with this last trick was trying to force me to speak. So my last hope was vain! The moment you put your foot in my hand and sprang with incredible lightness into the saddle—“She went up like a bird,” old Mason would have said, for he always judged a horsewoman by the way she mounted—I knew that I had no fault to find here. I felt a deep joy and a great fright! . . . I was so glad to see you ride astride. I know there are many men who prefer a woman to use the side-saddle, but I cannot understand them. Of course such riding requires skill and may be graceful, but a woman cannot be her real self when she is sitting sideways on the horse’s flank, supported by the pommel of the saddle. It seems to me that there must always be something artificial and constrained about it. The firm seat, the independent grasp of the reins, the bold, free line of the shoulders, the natural, light, forward urge of the body, everything a woman reveals so spontaneously when she can ride, these qualities cannot express themselves with the same purity from the side-saddle. The truth is that a person’s individuality, his characteristic attitude to life, the way he attacks and masters things—or fails to master them—is unmistakably revealed in his way of sitting a horse. . . . I could not take my eyes off you. I wanted to look into your eyes, straight into your eyes, under the brim

of your little hat—but you did not give me so much as a glance, Monica! You were in league with Erin; you stayed a little in front, taking little heed of your companion. But your voice sounded so gay! Again everything was like a song, a single, joyous *allegretto*. I saw how you loved to ride by the way the colour mounted in your cheeks, and by the keen, frank happiness of your glance. Strange how one's eyes seem to grow clear when one is riding! I have noticed the same thing in mountaineering, but a ride gives to the eyes a comfortable sense of being rested, bathed and cooled. The heart grows hot and the eyes cool—a good contrast! I think you knew the words I managed to repress. But you probably thought—as I did, but with greater effort—“Better say nothing! Better be silent on this grand spring morning! Better ride! Life is beautiful, can one improve it?”

But the unspoken words burnt in my heart. I had in my wallet that little letter of yours, written on Sunday evening; its tone was so new, and it contained the word I had never heard from your lips—*Du!* What words could I find for that? You have not wanted to repeat it, even to-day, and your wish is my law. But I must tell you that my eyes bore that word back to you, and my loneliness is filled with it and with nothing else!

Once, when we had already turned to come back, and the horses, breathing deep before another trot, came close for a moment, you turned your head and looked me full in the face. I am living in that look, Monica!

B.

CARLTON HOTEL,

Wednesday, May 28, 1930

It is still early morning, dewy and fresh. The rhythm of the ride, lingering in my limbs, awoke me. Or perhaps it was the scent of the dawn, streaming in through the open window—full of passionate gaiety, like that blissful, solitary star, quivering in the morning sky. If only I had the enchanting

little Erin here in the stable! Perfect joy makes one dumb. I feel I can share it only with animals, who have *no more eloquence than myself*. I have a longing for silent and understanding friends, like horses. I want to *stroke their necks* and to hear their contented snuffling. Erin entered so fully into the joy of that indescribable May ride. If I were to say to her: "Do you remember?" she would understand me perfectly. I am sure she would. She simply knows everything exactly. Just you ask her. And so do I, Ben. I too know everything exactly. That eternal morning fills my heart as if some God had bidden the sun stand still above it. I have absorbed the whole earth into myself—and the earth is no more than a golden bubble, in whose crystalline transparence is stored each brimming moment of the day.

I wish I could clasp the hand which lifted me into the saddle under the red flowering chestnut trees, and lay it on my eyes and never let it go.

Halting words, Beloved, but I want this letter to be lying on your oak table first thing this morning.

LE PRÉ AUX MÉLÈZES,  
Wednesday, May 28, 1930

MY GENEROUS DARLING,

I saw you only from a distance in your lecture and had to let you drive off with your host and hostess to the International Club while I stayed behind, an anonymous stranger who was yet happy to the bottom of his heart. For your glance, your smile, the faint inclination of your head as the car went by—these belonged to me. It was these that gave me the courage to push my way to the centre of the crowd around you after the *conférence* in the afternoon. I mustered all my diplomacy, and the result, I think you will agree, was not a bad one. So they all came with me to my garden and let me give them refreshments, which was better than you and they spending such a heavenly afternoon indoors. How en-

chanting you were at our improvised tea-party! How sweet and *generous* towards me—that word expresses you so well—and yet we never spoke to each other, except such things as one can say with a dozen people around one. But somehow you gave me so much . . . ! It is one of fate's mean little tricks that Perrier passes the Carlton in his car, and can give you a lift, but on no account must I be ungrateful to fate; that would be a crime. To-morrow you are to go for a sail, and then to lunch with the German consul. Nothing for me! But in the evening I shall see you at Evelyn Batten's, and there will be Brahms's *lieder*, and the moon above the mountains! Monica—sweet!

Now the garden is empty and silent, full of enchantment after the populous afternoon. I read that little word in your letter and cannot believe it—*Du!* We have no equivalent in English, and I always thought we could do without it. But it is a precious thing, that enables one with a single syllable to step into a new world!

I think of you—*Du!*

B.

CARLTON HOTEL,

*Early morning, Friday, May 30, 1930*

DEAR, DEAREST FRIEND,

Not to waste time in explanations, I am enclosing an express letter from our special friend, Volker Brons, which I found on my table when I reached home. I shall have to leave at once. I shall deliver both my lectures to-day, consecutively, and catch the six o'clock train this evening. There is no object in going by air, because I could not travel by night. And it would not save time.

Do not come to the lectures to-day, Ben. There would be so much I should have to push into the background to enable me to get through my task creditably.

But call for me and take me to the station. Come early. Come at four o'clock. We can sit on my terrace . . .

No, after all, I would rather spend our last hour together in your yellow drawing-room—at home with you.

I am sending my luggage to the station and will expect your car at half-past three.

MONICA

*Enclosure: Express letter from Volker Brons*

BERLIN,

*Wednesday, May 28, 1930*

On Saturday, Monna, I am going to pack up Jürgen and take him to the White Hart, Dresden. Comment is superfluous. He was simply sent home from office, and he offered no further resistance. It cannot go on like this, and as the long final struggle in this damnable state of things still lies ahead of us, it is best for him to knock off now. Perhaps he will be able to take a hand again later. As a matter of fact there is no alternative, and when one of us says a thing like that, you, sister and mother, know all there is to know. So join us as soon as you can. In any case, we both miss you more than we care to say, and more than you can possibly realize. I can stay on in Dresden till Sunday. At a pinch, I could put off my return till early on Monday morning, and still be in time for office, if I go by air.

But you will come, won't you? It would be just as well if we could at least find time for a talk in Dresden. Wire the hour of your arrival to my house. It will be telephoned to me. I am staying with Jürgen, of course. Sleeping in your room! Pardon the liberty.

I'll meet you at the station.

VOLKER

IN THE DRESDEN TRAIN,

*Early morning, Saturday, May 31,*

I do not know, Ben, if I can express in writing all the tumult of my mind. I hardly think so—after that stunning

plunge from the heights of the past few days into the abyss of separation. And then the anxiety about Jürgen! And the sudden shock of collision between the two homes of my heart! I feel as if a rock had crashed down into my heart; everything is obscured by the wildly dashing waves.

But one thing I must tell you: never for one moment of this long, this terribly long, journey have I lost the feeling that you are near me.

What a good idea it was to take Guy with us to the station! Kiss him from me—or, if that is not done amongst men, tell him I love him and that his roses are still deliciously fresh. The Lake of Neuchâtel was too sad and beautiful for words. The shadowy outline of the mountains was still visible. Soon afterwards all was dark. In my berth in the sleeping-car I felt as if I were lying on my back at the bottom of the lake. The waves of those last two days of ours were rippling over me. Which was best, Ben? That Thursday evening at Lady Batten's, where we were formally introduced to each other, you in a dinner jacket, I in an evening dress? You solemnly kissed my hand with a distant reverence, which could not have been bettered by the most promising young diplomat. Ah, and the music! But I cannot write about that now. And our drive through the night, between meadows of narcissus. Beloved! Was it really only yesterday at dawn that we stood by the closed door of the Carlton, while the birds were already singing their songs of joy? And now I am passing through Bebra, and this land is my home.

But in Dresden, Ben, I shall look for Frieder, of whom you told me. Hitherto I have not really felt the need of him. But it may be well that I shall presently be seized with longing for him.

It seems to me that this is the first time I sign myself

*Deine* MONICA

THE WHITE HART, DRESDEN,

*Sunday, June 1, 1930*

Geneva seems so far away—almost as if it had been caught up to heaven. “Orplid, my land!” But you, Ben, are quite near me. I feel your tender care surrounding me. I could lean back and rest against it. And that is what writing to you really comes to.

I arrived here a little before Volker and Jürgen, drove straight up here and was ready to receive them. Our rooms are not in the Sanatorium itself, but in a house standing on the edge of the high ground and overlooking the Elbe valley. The heady scent of the acacias, which are tumbling down all the slopes in cataracts of white blossom, is wafted up to us. It was very sensible of Volker to take rooms for us in this house, where his mother once stayed. We have it to ourselves. I think that if he had gone to a Sanatorium, Jürgen would have refused ever to leave his room. He feels so humiliated by this knock-out blow. He actually, to use their own sardonic slang expression, “crumpled up” during an interview with the Minister. He had been up all the previous night, working. And it hurt him to the depths of his sensitive soul to think that such a thing could happen to him when he was on duty. I do not think the torturing recollection gives him a moment’s peace, and that is worse than the thing itself.

Volker was right when he decided that it would be better for us not to meet at the station. It is best to let these soldiers—as they still are fundamentally—have their own way. Each is aware of the weak spots in the other’s self-control. And then, Jürgen is distressed because I have left Geneva. He knew that I wanted to devote some weeks to studying the connection between economic development and social policy at the International Labour Bureau and in the archives of the League of Nations. It is a subject in which he himself is interested. He says that if he has to lie up here, it is pure waste to have people watching him. And that it is not as if he needed nursing.

The truth of the matter is very different. To begin with, the doctor has put him to bed. As children we considered staying in bed a most effeminate proceeding, though a decent person might perhaps lie down on his bed once in a way. He is waiting to see what will result from such a condition of complete exhaustion, once the patient frankly capitulates. I was not much alarmed when Jürgen first arrived. He had managed to pull himself together so successfully that he looked almost fit. But my anxiety is steadily increasing with every hour. I am sitting on the balcony and can look at him through the open door, and my heart is hot and heavy within me when I see all the marks of the suppressed strain, which he has been undergoing all these years, appearing, line by line, on his handsome, virile face. I am rather proud of him, you see. At the back of it all lurks that still deeper anxiety, which goes back to the time, just after the War, when for a whole month I did not know where he was. We have inherited from our old Münsterland race a strain of melancholy, which might well overpower him some day. Volker is splendid. He has just gone away, but will be back at Whitsuntide. This war camaraderie between men, who have lived through desperate times together, is perhaps the most beautiful of all human relationships. We share the not too easy task of keeping away from Jürgen everything connected with his work—the doctor has given strict orders about this—and at the same time calming his despair at the thought that he will be hopelessly out of touch with everything at the end of this indefinite period of inaction. It is true that in his department developments are so rapid that in four weeks' time the whole state of affairs may be different. Luckily I have enough technical knowledge to be able at least to keep track of these matters, and Jürgen knows that he can depend on me for this; so that, when his health is sufficiently recovered, he will not have to pick up the threads all by himself from the beginning. But where am I to find the necessary vitamins to stimulate the life with which his empty hours are filled? I have not



much faith in mere nursing. An invalid has need of something to which he can look forward, of some force like the *jet d'eau*, the consciousness of something that uplifts him. Ever since last spring I have known this secret. On the long journey to Dresden, I read a letter of Rilke's, in which he speaks of two lovers, who have access to the inexhaustible bounty of their own hearts; "who draw from God their sustenance and whom death cannot harm." But no mere sister or friend can suffice for that. Sisters and friends can give a tired man companionship, but not fresh energies. There is one other potentiality: Germany. But in politics and economics miracles never happen as they do, sometimes, to individuals.

I can begin another letter to you this evening, dear friend, who are so very near to me. This one must catch the post. It is too soon for me to have heard from you—Oh! that void Immense.

MONICA

*The same evening. Later*

I have some quiet hours before me. Early in the night Jürgen was given a sedative and is now asleep. When I looked in just now, he was lying with his arms above his head, and that child-like attitude, combined with the unmistakable look of suffering on his careworn face, brought the tears to my eyes. He would be very angry if he knew that I had seen anything of the sort and that I was actually writing about it. Am I giving him away? But when I am writing to you, Ben, it is not as if I were really giving anything away. I simply cannot help myself. I must open my heart to you.

In that beautiful letter of Rilke's which I was reading on the journey, it says that we are never "prodigal enough in loving." Do you agree with that? It must be true, I think. If the power of the heart is boundless it should be equal to any demand that is made upon it, and fill to the brim each empty bowl that is held out to it. And we ought never to

find ourselves at the end of our resources, when our hearts are invoked, and we could give our help.

The nightingales are singing in the acacias under the balcony. During the War I was nursing for a while in Hungary in a hospital for seriously wounded men, just when the acacias and jasmines were in flower. It was during the great Russian offensive in 1915, and the hospital was full of dying men. We were all so young—the whole country was like a garden. Over it all lay that sweet, heavy perfume, and at night the gipsies played their violins. I cannot sit out on the balcony, because Jürgen's door opens on to it, and the light might disturb him. But all the essence of the summer night is in that perfume and in the insistent voices of the nightingales.

I keep thinking of the Brahms Symphony the other evening, Ben—the first music we ever heard together. I love it so. You have to know the Symphony thoroughly, I think, for the piano arrangement to convey very much to you. The opening passage has something of the cadences of bird-song: that duet for flutes and bassoons—above the ineffably simple, restrained and sombre theme for 'cellos. That passage pierced my heart with a thrill which was almost like fear. There was something new about that evening, something resembling the divine gaiety of our ride. Above the dark undercurrent that flowed between us, flashed the lighthearted play of our three-sided English conversation with the unconscious Sir Roderick. He was so gratified to think that he had placed his guests so cleverly and that Mr. Tarland, whom he admired so much (he kept assuring me that you had done marvellous things in India), was enjoying himself so thoroughly. You flirted in the most graceful, spontaneous way. This time it was Selim who took the lead. I could hardly keep up with you.

Then came that opening passage. The superficial play broke off, and the dark undercurrent rose singing to the surface and everything was filled with it. It is surely one

of the great mysteries that music can sum up all the ultimate elements of a feeling in one complete and perfect expression.

More than mere expression—is it not as if the greatest gift of all were bestowed upon us anew? I have never felt that my inner self was so utterly penetrated and illuminated by music as it was that evening. Do you know that Brahms said of this Second Symphony that it was the most elegiac thing he had ever written and that it ought always to be printed with a mourning border round it? Volker told me this. The musical historians take that remark for a joke, which he made to amuse his friends. But I do not agree. It seems to me as if the compelling beauty of this confident and certain major key lay in the fact that close, very close behind it, lurked the minor key—the possibility of it, and he knew that. I have been listening to the nightingales. They sing in the major key, I think, as all birds do. But something vibrates with it—how shall I express it?—some echo of the night, of shoreless seas and unknown dangers.

It is very late and I must stop at once. Jürgen suddenly called out from his room: “Monica, you are not still working, are you?” The light had filtered through the cracks of the badly fitting door, and the sedative had not been sufficient. But he was allowed to have a second dose. I sat for a little while by his bedside until it began to work, and he said to me with his charming, elder brotherly smile:

“Tell me a little about Mr. Tarland, Monica. Did you see much of each other?”

And so I told him “a little about Mr. Tarland,” until it was time to pass my hand over his face and say: “Now, old boy, you can go to sleep. Good night.” But another evening I must not sit up so late writing. Good night, my Ben. Is the light burning in your turret?

I still believe that the heart knows no bounds.

Your MONICA

LE PRÉ AUX MÉLÈZES,  
*Saturday, May 31, 1930*

MONICA!

Yesterday and again to-day I tore up letter after letter and threw the bits into the grate; then at last, I pulled myself together and dragged myself away from my desk. I could not send you those letters, beloved, best beloved, and the other ones, the brotherly ones, meet for such a careful, anxious time, I could not draw them from the wild yearnings of my heart. All those letters that went into the fire and were consumed by the flames—though this in itself was a torment to me!—are still within me, and all I know is what in them has been reduced to ashes. But you know it all too—and that one moment, swept away by the current of haste and confusion, when, here at my desk, you placed your finger-tips on my lips, that moment is my balm and, at the same time, a new fever in my blood. Dear, gentle fingers! How good it was that they sealed what was stirring for utterance. What an infernal afternoon! One thing on top of another—first your letter with the enclosure from Berlin, then the wire from the Endicotts announcing their arrival in the evening. They wanted the loan of my car because their own was in dock again, and as I had promised to put them up any time they liked, they took their accommodation here for granted. Constance always likes to get her house in order herself. Then, just as I was setting out to fetch you—my darling, my unspeakably dear one!—their second telegram, saying they were arriving by the afternoon train. So there was nothing for it but to send the chauffeur to fetch you, and that gave us five minutes, five minutes by the clock, here in my room. You sat in my big chair, already inevitably and unconsciously leaving me, and yet bewilderingly sweet and seductive in your dark dress. It was maddening. You looked round with your lovely, expressive eyes—what did I say to you?—and then they all came swarming into the room. Then the cheerful noise and confusion of arrival and departure. Constance,

genuinely sorry that you were going, with that all-embracing presence she has—and that was the end of it for us. The youngsters, Pat and Bertrand and Guy, and the tea and sandwiches. Maddening! I do not know how I behaved. All I did was quite mechanical. After that night! After that night! Do you know that all yesterday and to-day I have been living like a stranger under my own roof. It was as though I had broken out of all my pens, and now I am busy finding my way back in the literal meaning of the words. You were so anxious when you left me, and our farewell at the station put an end to all my opportunities of doing anything for you—all the delicious daily planning on your behalf was stopped, lopped off as an axe lops off a flowering twig. Oh, I am an old fool and things are not so desperate. You will come again, you must! But these weeks with you were a whole lifetime to me, a whole lifetime! Our parting scared me like the Bornand, the fierce, destructive wind that bursts unexpectedly from the gorges and valleys of Savoy and devastates the gardens here.

For days we had scarcely had time to talk to each other. We had just lived, side by side, and I was looking forward with inexpressible eagerness to hearing you put into words what had happened to us. The 'cello-string, my 'cello-string! Without it the days will be strangely mute.

Will you have patience with me, dearest, if to-day I can speak only of what has just happened! Until I have word from you I can think of nothing else. I have felt the passage of each second since you left me, each second has been a burden, yet with a few great wing-beats time has borne us a few days on from that night in the moon-meadows of Gex when time stood still. That silence between us, that feeling that we need not speak of what was happening because it was happening to us, had become so deeply satisfying and so—indispensable! When the music began, that evening at the Battens', and I saw your smiling face grow grave, as when the wind drops on troubled water and suddenly the stars are

shining in it, deep and clear, I felt then a restrained force quivering within me. A restrained passion! It was as though some supernatural power were in league with me, which would help me to be alone with you. Only you, only you were in the world, and every note of that music was yours, was uttered to you. I drank you in through my eyes. I told you with my eyes how perfect you were, told you that in me there was nothing that did not belong to you. Words formed in my mind, life took shape in words of pure adoration. How wonderful it is so to love! There are moments so intense that they equal a whole lifetime; they are drops of divine dew from nature's own blossoming. Nothing that has once felt this dew can wither. You were very beautiful as you sat there in the chair, your head a little bent—I was so happy at the sight of your sweet, wise forehead and your temples, my delicate sweetheart! I loved you passionately, but I felt as though fire were running through my veins, as though you and I would both be burnt if I touched you. I murmured endearments to you: mistress, queen, beloved!

Do you know what happened then? The last part of the evening was blotted out for me in one question: Would you do what I was going to ask you, would you come with me for a timeless drive far, far away to the Jura under the great white moon? It was miraculous, that moonlight! As we left the Battens' I put your coat round your shoulders and knew there was no need for asking. We set off. You put your hand in the pocket of my big coat and called me "Ben" and I knew by your voice that you were smiling. I could not look at you for I was driving. We drove fast; the great winding road climbed broad and bright ahead of us. We flew up it. Do you remember the shimmer of white flowers in the meadows on either hand? First in faint streaks, then denser, then in great moonlit pools. It was too beautiful for speech. We stopped in the shadow of the mountain, a scented dewy meadow in front of us, where the flowers were, as it seemed, transfigured. All I remember is that I put a big fur rug around you and

you threw your arm round my neck. Thereafter I knew nothing but your lips. Your lips and the flowers and the dewy grass were one. I kissed you for an hour, for an hour, Monica! How can I bear to speak your name without holding you in my arms, without kissing you, without looking at you in that soft, transfigured light, more beautiful than any light in earth or heaven? Do you remember how we walked together into the flowery field? You leaned so close against my shoulder, so close! You bent to the flowers, which were so thick in the moonlight, their bright faces like the faces of children, and you touched them with your hand. I was glad that you did not want to pluck them; they were so much more beautiful in the grass, swaying slightly on their long slim stems, with their delicate petals and the bright yellow discs of their cups floating as it seemed in the air. Narcissi are miraculous flowers, I have always felt that; as long as I can remember I have thought them the loveliest of blossoms, and loved them shyly after the manner of a boy, who knows such things are not for him but loves them just the same. I know now why I loved them—because one day they would bloom for you on these meadows of fairyland, for you and therefore for me.

Monica, I cannot bear it. I promise you that things will improve with the passage of time, but to-day it is all too much for me. At the last moment, when it was time for us to go home and you were about to get into the car, you rose once more on tiptoe, with closed eyes and an indescribably sweet smile, and gave me another kiss, unasked, a long, long kiss. Why did you do that, my sweet, my beloved? After such a kiss a man really should die. Write soon!

BEN

THE WHITE HART, DRESDEN

*June 3, 1930*

Your eagerly awaited letter of Saturday arrived early this morning. At the first word of it, I was standing beside you

at your roomy writing-table and watching the whole process. I saw how that large hand of yours—rather less placid than usual—covered the little sheets of notepaper. And sometimes you clenched your hands or pressed them against your eyes, as you did the first time—no, the second time—I came to see you after your accident. I still remember how much that gesture startled and moved me. I did not dare then to do what I dare now: press a kiss on your thick hair, as you sit there with bowed head. My poor Ben—there was a curse on us that last afternoon. Your guests were like an avalanche of sand, on top of the morning's fall of rock. But you behaved with admirable restraint. Even Constance's enquiring eyes could detect nothing more than regret at this sudden ending to a "very good time," and sympathy for me. For a moment I felt: if only I had not asked you to send the car for me. But during the few minutes that we were alone I was thankful from the bottom of my heart that I had come—and afterwards I was thankful even for the tumultuous conclusion. Because I felt as if the strings must snap if the tension lasted any longer.

I shall come back, you know, Ben; I tell myself so over and over again, day and night, whenever the meadow of narcissi gleams from afar. Of that night, Beloved, I hardly dare to say one word, for fear it should vanish, or a single one of its glamorous moments be dimmed by my touch. But your letter, Ben, is like music to which it is set. I have been reading it again and again in these long quiet hours, which, in spite of everything, are beautiful because they afford such ample space to the echoes of those weeks in May.

Jürgen keeps assuring me that he will really be able to do without me soon. But that is nonsense. It is obviously too soon for a definite opinion. I am arranging for the two of us to lead a very quiet life for some weeks. I work through his correspondence, official papers, journals, reports, pamphlets; he is at last allowing himself to relax, and the doctor is satisfied that this is as it should be. He puts in a great deal of sleep, and so I have ample leisure for everything. And the



rest of the time we are really almost happy. Jürgen himself said to-day, jokingly, that he was delighted to be making my acquaintance again. There is something in what he says. When was there ever a time during the last years when we could spend hours together, wrapped up in each other? To be cut off like this from everything—that, too, has its charm; it enables me to absorb those blissful, overcrowded weeks into my life. I know now that everything that they contained will sink deeper and deeper into my soul until the foundations are reached, the innermost core of my being.

I throw my arms round your neck, Ben, as I did that day in the meadow—too gloriously happy to be conscious of any wish, just as I was then.

Your MONICA

Is Erin still in your stables? Tell me about her.

LE PRÉ AUX MÉLÈZES, GENEVA,

*Sunday, June 1, 1930*

The first of June and a Sunday! This should prove a propitious day for everyone around me. I am trying not to spoil it for anyone; I want no one to notice that I have crawled away, as it were, into a dark hole in the wall, and am there waiting for your first letter, dearest, to bring a little ray of light. And in fact no one does notice it! I have taken special pains to conform to the general gaiety, and Guy's friendly unconstrained manner shows that I have succeeded. The boy serves very well as a barometer, or better still as a seismograph; he responds to agitations. He gets that from his father; the Bartholomews have always been a bit thin-skinned. I must see that he gets hardened as much as possible against the time he needs it. And I can see that time coming. He and I have been working up in the room in the tower, and we shall often do so in future. Last night we let out

Selim and Erin into the big paddock, so that they could spend their week-end in the fresh air according to the good old English custom. They enjoyed it thoroughly and we two enjoyed watching them. Animals take an incredible pleasure in such things, and show it so unmistakably. When the halter is taken off and a horse is left alone in a big green paddock, it first takes a few paces, then stops, raises its head and seems to be thinking. Its eye is calm, its ear attentive but without strain. It sniffs at the grass, but grazing is a secondary matter; it walks with unusually long and easy steps the whole length of the paddock, looks over the hedge and keeps stopping and standing quite still. Then it suddenly breaks into a gallop and sweeps across the paddock, snorts loudly and shakes itself or throws itself on the ground to roll over repeatedly from one side to the other with splendid zest. Then it jumps up and walks on a few steps, looking rather embarrassed—this part amused Guy immensely—it is quite strange, quite independent and belongs to no one. I love to watch these animals in their natural freedom. A week-end at pasture keeps them young. Selim is a proof of that. The little mare has no need of rejuvenation; she is a splendid creature and enchantingly high-spirited.

Next week she will leave us and go back to her own stable. Tom and Maisie Endicott are coming and a niece of Constance's, and so she will be kept pretty busy.

To comfort myself and to anticipate your return, my dearest, Guy and I are going over to the Hargreaves' tomorrow. They have a little hunter about the same size as Erin, which they want to put out. "We must have something in the stable for when Miss Velmede comes again," says Guy. His pony is not good enough. Oh, my beloved, can you not see that I am rambling on in this fashion in order to keep my letter rational? I am so restless, and shall be till I hear how things are going with you. I am forcing myself to take part in all sorts of social activity to avoid thinking of myself and realizing how unspeakably I miss you. I am so glad that

I made your brother's acquaintance, though for such a short time. Now I can imagine something of your comradeship. I have always been interested in the strange and beautiful relationship between brother and sister. You two are a rare example of it in its finest form, and that is partly due to the great events through which you have lived together. We do not think about this subject enough. This relationship is remarkable too when it cuts across national frontiers, as is the case with myself and my step-sisters. It has been proved again and again that in practice only purely human bonds have any validity, the actual blood relationship counts for little. It is a question of harmony in living, thinking, feeling, and that shows itself quite spontaneously; either it is there or it is not there. No coercion can produce it. Only one of my sisters is really near to me, and that seems to have nothing to do with our physical kinship. She is Semmele's mother. This odd child derived her odd name from no less a person than Semele, beloved of Zeus. That is to say, she discovered it when, at the age of ten, she felt an irresistible impulse to play tragedies, and delved into the German classics to see what she could find. The small number of characters made this early drama of Schiller's obviously suitable, for the young producer had no one but her six-year-old brother, Peter, and Therese, a nursemaid of fourteen, to support her. She acted the title rôle of "Semmele" (how else was she to pronounce it?)! She was a marvel of versatility, for she had also, with a sort of ventriloquial adaptability, to impersonate Juno and give frequent help as prompter. The name has stuck to her. It has long been one of my rooted convictions that a country where a child like Semmele can grow and flourish is quite indestructible, world-war or no world-war. . . .

*Evening*

Constance has just left me.

We have been walking up and down in the garden, and I have had to exert myself to circumvent her intention,

pursued with great obstinacy, of talking about you. How different it was last March! Then I was always waiting for her to mention your name! But to-day I cannot speak of you with anyone, Monica! Beloved! There is something in me that grows desperate at the mere thought of it. No one—I feel it with a sense of revolt more passionate than I have ever felt before in my life—no one must dare to speak to me as though he knew you better than—yes, than I! I, foolish, audacious old dreamer, whom Fate has granted only a few days, and in each day a few precious hours, of your company. I do not want to hear what old friends, old acquaintances, have to say about you! No, I *will* not hear. I would rather they left me to my immeasurable yearnings. Nothing they can tell me can help, can slake this illimitable thirst for you. . . . What are you doing? Where are you? What are you thinking of? Perhaps I shall be better when I have a letter from you, and know a little more of how your days are passing. Dresden! To-day, as I was turning out a drawer, I came upon an old picture of Frieder, and for a second I was tempted to send it to you—such a lanky, earnest-looking youth, of about seventeen I should think. But heaven knows I am jealous of Frieder. Why should he be with you when I cannot?

This house, with all its visitors from England, has been rather like an English Sunday to-day, that is, terribly boring. It is a well-known fact that most English people spend all Sunday afternoon asleep. It is wonderfully beautiful now, a glad, transparent summer evening. How am I to bear it? I have a feeling of physical thirst. I am restless as though I were really thirsty, and I shall be no better till your first letter comes. Perhaps there will be word from you to-morrow, a note written in the train.

I miss you so terribly that my wishes dare not come near to passionate desire. I say to myself: If I could only see you, among other people, strangers if you like—see you in the garden, catch a glimpse of you from a distance. Is one always

so spendthrift in times of great happiness that the crumbs left over would, if one could save them, be heavenly bread?

I speak your name like a prayer.

BEN

GENEVA, LE PRÉ AUX MÉLÈZES,

*Early morning, Wednesday, June 4, 1930*

It is in the early morning hours, beloved, that I dare to read your letters. The early morning has such a heavenly air at this time of year, and somehow it helps me. It belongs completely to the great, blossomy world of summer. It draws one irresistibly into this world, though my broodings try to hold me back in the shadows. I should like to walk through this bright world as a shade through a kingdom of mortals. But your letters and the early morning have such a different compelling tone, and their compulsion is a comfort to me, for I must tell you, darling, that I see you in all this radiance, you, in whose letters every word speaks of sweet, natural strength and self-control, pungent as forest air. I think of you unceasingly, but I can only tell you this in the mornings when the day still weighs lightly upon me. When evening comes, I let the stream of events bear me and the others along—there are ten of us now round the big dining-table. Sometimes I stay in the room in the tower and read. These days I can read only German books; I have wanted to do so for a long time, and now it happens that I am studying the language which you speak, darling. Goethe has taken hold of me, and I do not think I ever read him properly before. How broad and calm he is; I am receptive to him now as I have never been; I know how intensely he must have lived to speak to us with this calm breadth. But even in this I miss you terribly. You see I can find no refuge anywhere, and indeed I do not look for one. On the contrary, I search your letters for all you have not said; I begin always with the envelope, it is a source of unfailing delight to read my name

in your handwriting! Oh, I will not tell you too much of my deep need! That belongs to the dark evening and the long, long night, and I am writing this in the early morning.

Whitsuntide is in the air. The presence of all these happy, light-hearted holiday-makers compels me to play the part of host, to try to make life smooth and comfortable for other people. In the early mornings the youngsters generally go riding; I have crept with relief into the protective shell of an old uncle, who cannot be counted on to take part in every escapade. Guy's mother is here for Whitsuntide, much impressed by his manly independence and quite in agreement with all I am planning for his immediate future. That is very satisfactory. I was ready to fight for the boy and I am relieved that it is unnecessary.

There is not much to say of the rest. None of them is over twenty-five, and that gives a Whitsun lightness to the general mood for which I am duly grateful. I like happy people. The great thing, however, is that the clouds of your anxiety for your brother seem to be lifting. I have a great, unreasonable hope—but I will not speak of it for the present; it would sound too much like a challenge to fate, and for the first time in my life I am rather wary of fate.

I need you, Monica! I need you beyond all telling. What is it that I need so unspeakably? It is to carry to you every thought, every deed, all that happens to me. There are thousands of questions that only you can answer. When I put on my table your dear letters, folded and unfolded a thousand times, they are a medium through which I try to learn all those untold qualities that live within you. Now you are far away in your own world. I question your sweet letters and they give me comforting answer, but my deepest need they cannot satisfy. Sometimes I think a woman can scarcely know the strength and comfort she can give, even in the severest trials, to an absent lover, living on memories and fancies. In the last few days something has come back to my mind which I thought I understood when it happened, but

its true significance has only been revealed to me by these days of separation from you. When tiger-hunting in India, we were the guests of an old maharajah and spent a few days in the mountains with an English major, the commander of the British troops in the neighbourhood, who was much esteemed by the native ruler. It was dangerous work, for the old tiger had been shot and injured by natives and was very savage. It came to a fight at close quarters, the major attacked the beast with great courage and inflicted a fatal wound, but could not prevent the tiger in its death agony felling him to the ground. Before we could run to his aid, the dying animal had mangled his right arm. An old, sick tiger is almost always infected with deadly poisons; there was danger of blood-poisoning and it was necessary to amputate the lacerated arm without an hour's delay. One member of the expedition was a doctor and he had his instruments with him, but by an oversight the anaesthetics had been left behind. The injured man was told of this fact. He remained quite calm, but asked for his wallet and took from it his wife's photograph. If he could keep his eyes on her picture during the operation, he told the doctor, he could stand it without an anaesthetic. There was no time to be lost. Sitting at the table, his eyes fixed in stoical silence on his young wife's photograph, he allowed them to cut off his arm. He did not so much as blink, but his jaw was set like iron. He is still alive and—I thank God for it for his sake—so is his wife.

It is with bitter-sweet and strangely mixed feelings that I think of you in the neighbourhood, in the very town, where I received my first conscious impressions of life. Long, long before you were born! I get quite melancholy when I think of it all. Is it love when a man finds for the first time that he cannot think of himself as an individual, that he needs the essential, formative, complementary person? Yes, it is hard to see how one could ever become complete again. Suddenly, since you left, I have lost that quiet awareness of myself, that naïve integrity, with which one felt in harmony with life.

In these days I have become almost exclusively an earnest inquirer. Life has become incredibly beautiful and precious, I wish to live to the very depths of my being; each day with its new lesson has become a new wonder, and I have so many, many questions to ask. So many questions to ask you, for you are the wonder in person.

Were you not there all those years before your birth when I was alive and conscious? How could I exist without you? . . . Now I should like to stand at your side, by your desk, or outside on your balcony perhaps, when you are alone and can find time to look at the far one in need of you—without the near ones who are so happy in their nearness. I should like to exchange the years I have spent in the old town, where you are living now, for fresh years of youth! What a pity that cannot be done! What splendid use I should make of them! . . . I was reading a good, wise book by the German writer, Hans Carossa, and found in it these words, which seemed to come from his soul: "But the heart does not remember when it began to beat, it feels beginningless and endless, and in the most intense and youthful moments of our existence, when the waves of life lift us high and we see farther than usual, time's illusion ceases; nothing lives but the eternal spirit."

I kiss your small wise hand, beloved!

BEN

THE WHITE HART, DRESDEN,  
*Night, Friday, June 6, 1930*

After a day, which has been strangely agitated, strangely tense, I think that I shall have to write to you all through the night, Beloved—to the retreating thunders of a prolonged storm, which gathered about the Elbe valley this afternoon and burst this evening. Jürgen was allowed to lie out on the balcony to-day, and together we watched the clouds moving up and massing together, blue like a sword with knife-edged



rims, above the soft ivory-white of the acacia-covered slopes. It was as if in this drama of the skies, the incalculable, the irresistible forces that control our destinies, were manifesting themselves. Fear? No. But I was filled with such longing for you, Ben, that I thought my heart must burst. It was a special kind of longing. In my last letter I stood beside you and stroked your hair; because I felt that you were troubled—and now I should like it to be the other way round. I long to feel the touch of your hand upon my eyes—“Father, brother, anything.”

We had such a happy afternoon together, Jürgen and I. I think we have never felt so unconstrainedly, unreservedly near to each other. Brothers and sisters, you know, have that curious, defensive attitude towards those of their own blood; they resent the insight which arises from kinship and familiarity. Or else they rely so entirely on the permanent bond between them, that they never attempt to break new ground.

To-day when Jürgen appeared for the first time on the balcony, “in mufti” as he called it, I was a little alarmed about him. He had insisted on dressing. The first time an invalid is dressed, one receives quite a different impression of his condition. He has grown so thin, and he looks so deadly tired. But Volker, who understands him better than I do, did him a good turn. He ransacked text-books on the subject of neurosis, and sent him an extract about the neurosis of exhaustion from one of them. There it said that overstrain of the will power, in such conditions of exhaustion, may lead to fainting fits, and that there have actually been cases of overworked doctors dropping down dead in the middle of their work, simply from excessive strain and devotion to duty. Although Jürgen tossed it aside with an exclamation of disgust, because of the other physical symptoms described in it, it was nevertheless a relief to him to see in black and white that there was nothing discreditable in his collapse—quite the contrary. I think that now that his soul is delivered from this burden, he will behave like a good, sensible patient,

and leave his recovery to his own vigorous constitution. Volker is arriving to-morrow and staying over Whitsuntide. We never talk much, Jürgen and I (it is so easy to stray into the forbidden domain of work), and yet the time is not empty. It makes me so happy. When I helped him into his long chair to-day, he kissed my hand and held it in his, quite unself-consciously. In silence we watched the drama unfolding above the valley, and between us, without one spoken word, flowed the deep friendship which links us to each other. All the hours of those prodigious years, in which we were conscious of the affinity between us, came forth from the background of those days, when we had never time to dwell upon them, because of the breathless tempo at which we were working. When the storm at last passed over, Jürgen was dead tired and I think that I need have no fear of disturbing him to-night.

There is something else I must tell you, Ben. Early this morning I was in the picture gallery. Have you seen the *Leda* of Michelangelo? I should like to look at it with you some day. But this morning it affected me so deeply that I was glad that I was alone. What is so magnificent about it is the idea of dispersing the sheltering darkness from the foreground by means of a light, which has its source outside the picture—a light which emanates from the Beyond, from Eternity itself. And this light, which reveals Leda so completely, with each splendid, relaxed limb, proves that she has no need of concealment. There is no line of her body which is not pure, divinely inspired, unquestioning worship. It is the most daring and splendid avowal of a love, which can venture all things, because it is perfect.

All is still now out of doors, as a slender slip of the waning moon sails through the scattered clouds. When it was full. . . . The narcissi must be over now. If I send this letter by air it will be in time to reach you for Whitsuntide. I felt a tiny pang when I wrote that word. How little I know about you, Ben, as yet. These festivals bring back to us all that is bound up with our lives, all that is permanent. You and I, Ben,

met each other far away from the edge of day, "on the roof of the world," in the no-man's-land of that great and unique love, risen from the foam of the sea. When I go down to the station to-morrow—or rather to-day—to meet Volker, I shall look out for the streets through which "Frieder," his brown cap on his head, passed on his way to school. You must certainly send me his photograph. You will, won't you?

Good night, Ben. How lovely to be able to say: I kiss you.

Your MONICA

THE WHITE HART,

*Night, Whitsuntide Eve, June 7, 1930*

MY DEAR, DEAR BEN,

I must just come back to you for a good-night kiss: the afternoon and evening were occupied with other "needy ones," as you call them. Ah, Ben, I cannot believe that anyone is more needy than myself—certainly not the others—especially now when the vast and living space of night surrounds me. Let me enter your turret room again, with its solitary light streaming out on to the trees in the park. I shall pretend that I am staying at the Carlton and that I simply must pay you another visit this evening. Simply must, because I know that it is what we both desire with the same intensity. Why should I not? I imagine that the door on to the terrace is still standing open, because the master of the house has not yet finished his day. I should leave the car down in the street and come up through the meadows, and say good night to Selim in his week-end paddock. He, too, is alone again now. He would recognize me, wouldn't he? And you would think it was just one of your guests, who wanted you. Constance, perhaps, in the throes of one of her sudden and untimely attacks of communicativeness. With a little sigh you would cover up your writing, and push back your chair, and then with your charming, never-failing, kindly courtesy, you would go to the door and——Let us

dream that dream together, Beloved, to the end—every evening such as this.

And now you may lock up the house and put out your light. And may the summer night shed blessing on you.

Your M.

LE PRÉ AUX

*Whitsuntide, Monday, June 9,*

MY DARLING,

I found your letter, written during the thunderstorm, on my return from a three-day motor-car tour. We all went to Chamonix in three cars and then skirted the lake, and came back via Martigny, St. Maurice and Montreux. The weather was indescribably beautiful, cruelly beautiful! During that long and beautiful journey I could scarcely master my feverish impatience and desire. And now my feelings break over me like a hurricane. I still feel the journey in all my limbs, the painful joy of speed, the surge of the road beneath the wheels, the feeling of dissolving distance—and a sense that all this expenditure of energy, this mastery of space, has failed to bring me one step nearer you—nearer the place where my heart was with its every fibre, my mind with its every thought! Monica, you must be merciful! You must let me tell you all that I have repressed again and again during these days of strain, for I knew that I ought not to expose you to the hurricane against which I struggle. The strange and wonderful thing is that I surely know that you have been aware all the time of how things stood with me, though you have said little about it. You knew it! But this evening I cannot keep it out of my letter, I must spread it out for you to see. Beloved, I ask nothing of you, I am not begging for your aid; only let me tell you this in all its strength and truth. Look on it as you would the rising tide of the sea, that swells immeasurable and irresistible, inundating all that lies in its path. Be wholly with me to-day! I have left everyone downstairs, and have

come up here to the room in the tower with its view across the lake.

No, the light is not burning, for I am not at home officially. I am out for the whole afternoon and evening, and I think I have deserved this respite! I shall go on writing to you as long as the light lasts. And when it grows dark I shall sit in my chair, thinking of you, seeing you, holding you in my arms! To-day my longing flows full and strong. Let me fill this wonderful midsummer night with all the dreams that cast their spell over my loneliness. I find it hard—as always when my feelings run away with me—to say all this to you in German. I make mistakes, and you speak English as well as I. In English there are words for such blossomy nights as fall here now on lake and meadow soaked with the scent of roses, words as light as spider's web—gossamer! To-night I feel as though I had taken a deep draught of some liquor brewed by Puck himself—no bond or barrier can restrain me; I can reach you however far you be, directly, bodily. And I will tell you everything in either language, just as it comes, English or German, in this free, enchanted land of the heart, where the one and only speech of lovers is spoken. Monica, sweet, beloved name! Perhaps, in spite of everything, I could have spent this evening like other evenings; more or less sensibly, resignedly, if something else had not been added to all that I felt before. Constance is refurnishing her house, and a number of Medici prints and other pictures have arrived from London with the chintzes from Waring & Gillow's. Among these prints is one I recommended to her myself. I must have done so by some unconscious association of ideas, for it was about three weeks ago, when you, my darling, were giving your first lecture in Geneva. Constance wrote from London asking me what picture I would advise her to hang in that lovely little room, built out like a chapel into the garden of her old house. I suggested the Leonardo that hangs in Burlington House, the *Madonna with St. Anne and the Child*, showing the heads of the two women, placed side by

side with incredible skill and effectiveness, so different and yet so strikingly similar, both filled with a unique delicacy and womanliness. I have always been struck by Leonardo's vision, his way of seeing women and conveying with a few scarcely visible strokes the expression of a mouth, the look of an eye. No one before or since has been able to equal him in this. But these two women—oh, Monica, they are both like you, both in some unique way related to you—or you to them! I am having a print sent out to you from London. I have had one myself for a long time, but for some incomprehensible reason have never taken it out of the portfolio; I have only looked at it now and then when I was alone. It is one of those things one hardly likes to speak of. Look at the Madonna's lips, sweetest! Look at her face! See the way her smile, beneath the mild glance of her lowered eyes, begins quite gently and yet with such youth and joy, mounting from a deep and happy wisdom, and breaks like the dawn—but words are sacrilege. And next to this young face the face of her mother, similar in form and noble beauty, but riper, calmer. The indescribable purity of the forehead, and the eyes, full of all mildness. The love and sympathy for the young mother's happiness and the deep, unspoken compassion. It is impossible to describe what the artist has expressed in those two faces. The greatest thing in the life of an intelligent and experienced man, the spell of woman, of woman tranquil but strong, drawing strength from her own hidden sources, has been given form in this picture. I cannot describe with what emotion I contemplate these two faces, here in my silent room, which, like all the rooms in my house, is full of your presence. Constantly I find there new beauties, new wisdom! And I bow before the sweet and fateful power that comes from them, I try to make place in my heart so that I can experience them completely, I dream the dream of infinite spaces. . . . This letter is my way of celebrating Whitsuntide, alone here in the wonderful silence, and as the climax of the festival I shall this evening telephone to you. I know it is

foolish of me, for the hot stab my heart will feel at the sound of your voice will be more violent and more permanent than the fleeting, illusory minutes of our communion. And you do not like the telephone! I will only say this: to-night I shall fight with my yearning, as never before—so think kindly of me! Even a strong swimmer may be drowned when the waves sweep over him too big, too fast, in too close succession. I know; for one day in the Bay of Karachi, in the Arabian Sea, our sailing-boat was swamped in a hurricane. The shore was not far off, but the waves were rolling sideways across our path, towering ever higher, and their force was so great that by swimming with all our strength we could only just keep afloat and hardly dared hope to survive. That feeling of calling up one's final resources in a last, desperate effort, comes over me sometimes, beloved, and in such an extremity one snatches even at a straw—even at a few words on the telephone. . . .

My darling, your letter of the day before yesterday, dispatched by air mail and express, had just been brought up to me. How sweet of you to have taken all this trouble for the far one in need of you! It brought a new tempest into the furnace of my heart, and yet it is like the dew outside in the scented garden. To me you are the summer that sends the scent of its flowers across the meadows. You come into this bitter, blissful solitude that is already full of you. Now I can believe that you are with me, in my arms, that we shall dream the dream together to the end. "Every evening such as this!" Give me that phrase again in your kiss, my solace, my sweet, deep spring of comfort. I hold you, and know not which is more beautiful, to look at you—the fine, clear line of cheek and temple!—or to kiss you. I am so hungry and thirsty for you that it seems to me that the mere touch of your hand on my shoulder, the look in your eyes, could quench the flames that consume me. And I could say nothing in response but just your name—Monica! Monica! Monica!

Your B.

THE WHITE HART, DRESDEN,  
*Whitsuntide Monday, June 9, 1930*

DEAR, DEAR FRIEND,

This is the last evening of the three-day holiday. I am sitting with your last week's letters in front of me and am conscious of something almost like despair. Have you ever come across those words of Goethe's: "Ah, what an abyss the night of absence is!" What a simple matter letters are, when we write to each other in Geneva! They are just the prolongation of our crowded hours together, the sunset glow on Mt. Blanc, when all the stored up radiance of the day is poured into the bosom of the night. But now they have to do duty for everything—to bring you my whole day with all its doings, and myself, with all that words can say and all that they must leave unsaid—my love, too, Ben, and how can that be packed into this stupid little scrap of paper? How can I contrive to stay near you, to bring myself near you through this inadequate medium? You said as much yourself. I could positively dread our next meeting—and it is only the thought that after all I shall soon be back that gives me the courage to try with all my might, and at all costs, to build the bridge over the abyss as long as it is needed.

No, Ben, that is not really true. It would be sad if it were, for there are bound to be other, more serious separations. Even if, through some stroke of fate, whole continents were to divide us, I can trust myself to find you, and embrace you in every word you write, as in the immortal hours we have spent together.

Yesterday a friend from Berlin, who is a Chinese scholar and an expert in Chinese art, came to tea with us. He was telling us about Ch'i Yun, the mysterious magic, by means of which an artist can project the essence of his being, as a creative impulse, into every blade of grass, every flower, every detail of his work. And about Chung Tsu-ch'i. One day he was in his boat on the broad river—how these Chinese pictures rise before one's eyes!—and heard the zither of



Pai Ya, and through his playing he understood the player so perfectly that from that moment they were united in a friendship such as has never been known before. When Chung Tsu-ch'i died, Pai Ya broke his zither because there was now no one left who could understand his playing and himself. The story made me so happy. How well I understand it! In our relations to each other, Ben, I trust to Ch'i Yun. . . . Sad that we Europeans are so fallen from grace that we must go to the East for symbols of such an intimacy.

From this you will gather that we are beginning to see visitors. But I soon noticed that Jürgen was getting tired and was forcing himself to conceal it with his usual self-control, so I cut the visit short. We agreed afterwards that we are happiest left to ourselves, and that we want no outsiders. After a moment of dejection, Jürgen was much relieved that the result of this experiment was a negative one, and that for the present, while he is in my charge, he can be as tired as he likes. My heart yearns over him when I think of the loneliness he endured all the time that he was trying to deceive both himself and us about his health. The doctor is glad that he has completely abandoned this attitude; it is a relief to him, too, and now he lets me spoil him as much as I like. And so we are both happy.

Volker was a great standby. We went for a ride both mornings. It is the only form of exercise his wound allows him, and there are very good riding tracks here. But it is hot and dusty even in the morning, and the common is swarming with Whitsuntide trippers. I thought it splendid and pathetic of these people, after months of drudgery, to give up their chance of a long morning in bed in order to enjoy the beauties of nature. But from the point of view of riding, these picnickers are a perfect curse. Every moment you have a rucksack or a perambulator under your horse's hoofs. We could scarcely move out of a walk.

But it gave us all the more time for talking, and I began to realize how completely during those short weeks in Geneva

—just think, Ben, it was barely a fortnight!—I had lost touch with German affairs. It is uncanny how rapidly the situation changes with us—not so much externally, as regards events, but internally, as regards views and opinions. There is a psychological undercurrent, which is approaching unknown rapids ever more swiftly. It is impossible to say with any accuracy what it really is. But it reminds one in a sinister fashion of the last months of the War. The patience and confidence of the nation seem, as it were, to be coming to an end. And where are the leaders, who have shouldered all the responsibility during these ten unhappy years, to look for new sources of confidence? We have not yet touched bottom in the world crisis—far from it. This unprecedented conglomeration of difficulties seems to be concentrating yet more closely, and catastrophes are bound to come. But the first task of the Government is to set its house radically in order. That means reduction of salaries, increase in taxation. Can a nation, of which nearly every member lives in a chronic state of financial anxiety, be tided over the crisis, which is now inevitable, by means of some catchword or other? All these painful operations, one after the other, with no guarantee that they will do any good! Because, fundamentally, no one can be sure of it. What happens at home is first and foremost the result of political pressure. Who can conscientiously say whether it is economically sound? And it does not depend on us. I can understand so well how, in all these millions of people, who have struggled through the difficulties of the last ten years, in all these timid little lives which we saw around us here at Whitsuntide, a feeling is gradually growing, which one constantly hears summed up in the half-threatening, half-distracted cry: “This sort of thing cannot go on.” But how can that feeling ever be changed? Certainly not by what is bound to be the next step. As you know, I see behind this acute crisis one that is far more formidable and decisive. The whole system of the world has no longer any strong backing of faith; it is unintelligent, and people have come to

realize it. Not one of these ineffective great men, whom I am always meeting, can talk me out of this—these men of practical experience who smile patiently at remarks of this description, but cannot furnish proof to the contrary.

And here I am again, Ben, dragging you into the circle of our troubles, in which we run round and round like the prisoner of Chillon—do you still remember that evening of our heavenly week-end, how we watched the lake lapping against the ancient walls?

Volker said good-bye to us this evening. He is leaving by aeroplane to-morrow morning. We have talked shop feverishly. He is such a splendid person for that. He has, for all his passionate sympathy, such a dispassionate, comprehensive way of looking at things. I often wonder if he is not a little like you. I think he is, in a way, but he is much less complex, as well as much more impetuous. By the way, Volker was always asking me eagerly what Mr. Tarland said to this question or that—for instance, to that feeble discussion in the May Session of the League, about the *Conférence préliminaire en vue d'une action économique concertée*, when it floundered about among expressions such as “*peu efficace*” and “*inadéquate aux difficultés existantes*.” Unfortunately you said nothing, did you, Ben? I could not help laughing a little as I thought of our ride. Don't you think that the third movement of the Brahms Symphony, in which the *quasi andantino* leads so divinely into the *presto*, and back again, reminds one of just such a ride in the springtime? I always meant to ask you this. I wish you would tell me.

Hallo! A telephone call from Geneva. I am going down to the telephone box, so as not to disturb Jürgen. How lovely, at the end of this letter, really to be able to say good night to you!

In haste,

Your happy M.

THE WHITE HART, DRESDEN,  
*Thursday, June 12, 1930*

I had such a quaint letter from Constance, Ben, full of her unaffected, intrepid motherliness. It reminded me of our first meeting in Rome in May 1914. I had just finished my studies and was travelling in Italy. It was with no thought of the International Women's Congress, of which I knew nothing whatever, that I had come to Rome, where I was staying at the Hotel de Russie. She dug me out, however, at once, and dragged me with her to the Congress. It was a little embarrassing to be escorted by an English woman, when I ought by rights to have appeared under the aegis of my own leaders, and I immediately joined the German delegates, as was proper. But they were staying at a different hotel, so Constance continued to mother me energetically, and I actually had a mild passion for her. I still remember how enchanted I was one night when she came from a meeting straight to my room, long after I had gone to bed, and said:

"Now, my dear child, I must talk to you about those impossible women."

They were not sufficiently determined to please her (and there she was perfectly right). Everything in their attitude seemed to her to be flabby and overcautious. But it was when we met for the first time after the War that I locked her in my heart for ever. She simply fell on my neck and burst into tears, and really it was the only thing to do. She is adorable.

But now, at all costs, she insists on my telling her something about "our dear friend." She will dissect us, Ben, tenderly, ruthlessly, like the bulbs in her garden. And to begin with, she is not quite happy about the whole affair—she does not like the look of you, she says. You do not seem to her to be happy. And she suspects me of being at the bottom of it. She does not say so—naturally—but there is always a kind of forced amiability about her when she is trying to convey a hint. Her only idea of friendship is something thoroughly

cheerful, pleasant and soothing, and so she thinks there must be something wrong with our friendship, if you are not shining like a smiling full moon.

This is a deep disappointment to her and it incites her to do whatever is humanly possible to efface and banish the disturbing element. After all it was Constance, Ben, who brought us together that afternoon in March.

Do you know, I am almost inclined to think she is right. I wish I could sit on the arm of your chair by the fire in the turret room and then try to tell you what I mean. With only the light of the fire. If only I could give you a kiss beforehand to supplement these foolish, inadequate words.

I do not know if I can tell you how deeply I was affected by your letter. No words can say how overpowering and wonderful it is to be conscious of the torrent of your love. For such brimming measure there is simply no name, no symbol; I feel it sweeping over me in its divine boundlessness, and I give thanks to you, Beloved, as one gives thanks for a gift of God. You must imagine that I am not writing this, but saying it, and that all the while you are clasping my hand as it rests on your shoulder.

But this other thing in your letters, Ben, since I went away, which is not mere longing but actual pain and torture—this thing that Constance reads in your face, and which I am conscious of in every word you write. I should have divined it even if you had not said that the nights were very long. I know that it is not the mere emptiness of a few short weeks. But the abyss of separation can make the senses dizzy, unless each moment is confirmed and made real beyond all doubt by the present, the utterly and wholly irreplaceable present. You yourself once admitted, Ben, that the heart could be a pusillanimous thing. All I would say to you, Beloved, is that I am aware of those clouds that rise out of the night of separation, and that I, too, am not free from their visitations. Let us discuss them like comrades, beloved friend. We both of us bear within us a whole past life with its deep, strong

network of roots. What will our love make of that past? We cannot tell. All we both know is this: our love is a new thing and unique. Let us not question. Let us not anticipate. Let the torrent bear us along—we cannot control it. Surely the annunciation of every heavenly miracle begins with the words: "Be not afraid." We will not be afraid, Ben, in the radiance of this miracle. May I say this to you, Ben? It is at once a confession and a promise. And do you think it will help you when the nights seem long? Is it not all too ineffably beautiful? Should we not accept it without reserve, and live utterly and simply in the present, like the birds beneath the sky? We have not sown, and we know not what we shall reap. It is blossom time within us. Perhaps Constance is wiser than we are. Give her my love. And tell her that she is the most intelligent, most experienced and warmest-hearted woman on this earth. Say that we both think so, and that "the things grow," anyhow. And now will you let me nestle closer to you in your chair and kiss you good night? Dear, dearest friend.

M.

LE PRÉ AUX MÉLÈZES,

*Evening, Saturday, June 14, 1930*

BELOVED,

The gentle, reassuring tone in your sweet, dark, 'cello voice has given me so much courage that I have been an exemplary host all the week. I have kept away from my desk and only gone up to the room in the tower to work with Guy, who is building a boat like the cement barge he went over. As it will be twenty inches long it is filling my last refuge pretty full of chips and shavings. But it does not matter; nothing troubles me so long as I may go on thinking that soon you will come back. So long as I can think that, I will do whatever they want. I find that you *can* say sweet things into the telephone—heaven be praised!—though once you told me it was impossible.

*The Heart Awakes*

L

Constance has now finished refurnishing her house and next week we are to have a housewarming. She has half a dozen people with her and I still have Pat and Bertrand. By the way, she was very pleased with the message I gave her verbally from your letter—it came just as I was setting out to have tea with her. She beamed and took hold of my arm, and as we wandered down the garden paths she often patted it, as she does her old sheep-dog when it has behaved itself. I think she was right when she tackled the apparently hopeless task of taking her husband out of the typical life of a retired Indian civil servant. Like all his colleagues he was sinking slowly but surely into a state of apathy. These active, capable men, who for years have been responsible for administrative districts half as large as England, do not know how to make use of their leisure. In England there is little for them to do; playing golf and reading the newspaper, with the usual occupations of country life, cannot satisfy them for long. Jim Endicott is unusually vigorous and his passion for mountain-climbing has more scope in Geneva than in Surrey; but without Constance's secret love for diplomacy—which of course is well known to him, for he is a clever old boy—his great powers of inertia would probably have defied all efforts to transplant him all over again. He knows that in coming here she has found at last, after all the long years in India, the right field for her inborn capacities. She is quite an inspiration to those who are still doing their obstinate best to set in motion the elaborate machinery of the Disarmament Conference and God knows it is needed. If they stay here for good they will form an excellent centre for the human and personal aspects of the cause. I think a great deal of her directness and courage in facing people and situations. I am quite touched by her writing to you about me, darling, but I am a bit ashamed too, for I ought not to be so transparent to the sympathetic eyes of those about me! I have taken it to heart and have made myself impenetrable, I think, so far as my own feelings are concerned.

My own feelings! Oh, my darling, I can speak of them here alone in the garden, but only to you! But I will say nothing of the insensate longing and hunger—you know it is really quite different from what I tell you. This bright, majestic day, so full of life and summer, among all these young, carefree people—but they too have their own burdens to bear; I have come across something I must tell you about later—such a long day as this makes one realize all that you are to me, all you have done for me, my precious, my dearest! More and more I need the wonderful relief which comes of exchanging all my thoughts with you; whatever happens to me, I want to bring it all to you. A dream come to life, yes, the living fulfilment of my most secret hopes that are still hardly conscious. Wonderful voyages of discovery in my own heart! I hardly realized it myself, but each day makes it clearer. All this is part of the work that love has to do in my heart. To harbour so conscious and illimitable a desire gives one a strange strength and certainty. In all my memories, all my hopes and thoughts of you, I eat dry bread and drink clear water. There is beauty in the way love chooses for itself the quiet frugal things when thinking of the beloved! I remember the first, the smallest details, the way you alighted from the train on the evening of your arrival in Geneva, the way we greeted each other, so lightly, so calmly, while in my heart the intolerable suspense of happiness dissolved into pure well-being at the touch of your hand. We *knew* each other. At that moment I felt it with such glad confidence! And then at the Battens', when you came in with several strangers from the moonlit garden and I heard you speak, there was in your voice that essential tone, unique, dark and beautiful, that belongs to you alone and delights me more than anything else on earth. And when you were with Guy and his chickens, there was such a light, joyous interchange between you and the boy. When you are there, it is as though the meaning of life had suddenly taken form, as though everything had defined itself and dropped into its right place. . . .



So little Maisie is actually a barrister-at-law! Good heavens! It seems only yesterday that she was six, running about with a little fair pigtail, a keen admirer of guinea-pigs. That is a typical remark for people of my age. We get that wistful grandfatherly feeling. Well, well! . . . She has grown up more quickly than her brother. Tom is still at Cambridge, at my old college, Trinity, and is going into the Indian Civil Service like his father. He still belongs to the good old type that studies hard for his career, and really it demands all kinds of accomplishments. That is not one of my good friend Bertrand's strong points, though I have a great liking for him. He thinks that with flannels and tennis-rackets he is pretty well equipped for work in India. Yet I am willing to bet that he does his job there, and I would rather trust him as a companion in the little incidents that occur in the daily life in India than many others I know. I am sure he will never lose his sang-froid in facing Indian conditions, or get jumpy when he finds a cobra under his bath or a scorpion in his slipper.

Beloved! Best beloved! As I write I glance from time to time at the anthology of poems and find there your little pencil-marks. I know I should not; I ought to read with due attention instead of turning pages in search of you. But I must! There is an indestructible magic in the fact that you have given me a sign here and there that these pages have been turned by your hand, that these thoughts have come direct from you to me, framed in beautiful German words. Ina Seidel repeatedly produces a note that makes one prick up one's ears. I knew something of her through Irene Forbes-Mosse, who lives hereabout and is now well known in England. She is one of those very few people who has her spiritual home in the general intellectual culture of Europe, in her own Germany and in England, France and Italy. I think it splendid that the learning of languages is still regarded in the old cultured German families as a necessary attainment. That is not properly realized in France and England, where the

acquisition of other European languages is shamefully neglected. Whenever an Englishman or a Frenchman really masters one of the great modern tongues, a different type of human being, bigger and wider, is revealed in him. There is no doubt that, in the study of other languages, Germany has done its duty as a good European much better than its neighbours. When I left a German school at the age of eighteen and came back to England, I knew more of English literature than the young men around me who came from English schools. I was often amused by it. There again you have that puzzling contradiction: the German is world-wide; there is ample room in his mind both for the strong nationalist view and for that which surveys and comprehends the whole world. And yet his leaders land him in the Great War! It is shattering; it is enough to drive one mad. The people in your set, the Germans who have a particular mental attitude and personal culture, come in contact only with exceptional foreigners; you have little influence outside Germany, because you have to devote so much of your energy to serving your ideals; you use up your strength inside Germany, and yet you would make the best possible advance post for Germany abroad. In such a capacity you would be inestimably valuable. I often think about this, and I should like to talk it over with you, my sweet—but there are so many other things I want to discuss with you! And that recalls my special hope, which I have wanted so often to reveal to you when I thought of your brother's convalescence. . . . Yesterday, as we were coming down in the car from the *rocher qui pleut* by Chamby, we passed all those delightful little places above Montreux, resorts and garden villages of great diversity and none of them too high, and it came into my mind that—but you can guess what! Why should not you two come and stay in one of these places! If you—but I cannot pursue that thought to the end. It would be heavenly! I had to tell you this to-day! Could not your doctor have an inspiration and give my plan his blessing? I look for some hint of it in every letter you

write; it is the first thing I look for! I am going to ride down to post now; it will soothe and reassure me to know that this letter is on its way to you. But I shall go on writing it. It is just noon now, wonderfully quiet here in the sunshine by the low wall. The doves are cooing sleepily. Everything deadly still, bewitched. Monica, oh Monica, how am I to survive to-day without you, and all the days to come? Why is the summer so wonderful, the days and nights so fine? Darling, I get so restless, so impatient, that a sort of berserk fury comes over me and I feel I could smash great rocks. I have an urge to throw myself into some fierce conflict, to assault some granite obstacle and force my way through it, to go on and on till I find relief from this tormenting and yet delicious pain.

I kiss your eyes and lips.

BEN

LE PRÉ AUX MÉLÈZES,  
*Evening, Sunday, June 15, 1930*

DEAREST BELOVED,

My quiet Sunday afternoon did not turn out as I had planned. First I was angry at the unexpected interruption, but now I have drunk in the distances and the summer beauty and am grateful. I have found quietness myself, and that is a gift from the gods. I had just settled down under the lime-tree to write a long, undisturbed letter to you. It was the only place where it promised any coolness. But young MacAlister turned up, a Canadian student whom I think I have mentioned before; he was one of your keenest listeners. He is teaching Guy Latin and doing it very well, though it is no easy job, for the boy is not allowed to read much. MacAlister has a way with children that I find very attractive. One of the really sound lessons I have learnt from life is to trust people who can get on with children and young animals. He is an enthusiastic yachtsman and therefore completely happy in this glorious weather, and he came to take me out

sailing, for he and a few of his fellow students own a small yacht. I thought it very nice of him, for he already had a companion, a girl student whom at first I took, in her white yachting kit, for a boy, though she proved to be an exceptionally charming young woman. They both wanted me to come, so they evidently were not in love, and I could make the third who is no company with a clear conscience. Apart from the pleasure of spending such a lovely afternoon on the lake, I had the chance to observe *in natura* the comradeship and unselfconscious friendliness which exists to-day among young people of both sexes, and about which a great deal of nonsense is talked. These two had got to know each other in Geneva, though they both came from Winnipeg and had a number of mutual acquaintances at home. They had grown up "way off on the prairie," as the little Canadian girl informed me with a wave of her hand, when I asked where she came from. I know and love the Canadian landscape; we hardly realize in Europe how beautiful it is, but I had never had much to do with Canadians. Now I had found two of them, and I was glad to let them talk to me and explain their point of view on the narrow problems of Geneva and the wider problems of Europe, while we sailed along in the fresh breeze. But the most important thing, darling, the spice of the afternoon, the thing that made up to me for the loss of long, dreamy, solitary hours with you, was that this little Miss Nielsen was one of your most earnest students. She told me several times that in you she had found at last a genuine insight into, and knowledge of, the hidden causes of the tragic state of the world, and was doing all she could to get to know you. "You know her, don't you?" she asked. "How can I get to know her?" . . . Well, I thought that might be managed. I was delighted to hear this intelligent girl putting into such vigorous words her anxiety to see you and speak to you. She suggested rather hesitatingly that she should write to you, and I advised her to do so and gave her your address in Berlin. Now she can plead her own case. But this taste—shall we

say?—that we have in common made us very good friends and we got on famously together. She is coming with Duncan—young MacAlister—to the Endicotts' housewarming. Constance told me to be sure and find her some more young people, for there will be dancing.

Now there is just time before the last postal collection to slip between the pages of this letter a four-leaf clover I have just found in the grass. Thus one should find happiness, unsought, unexpected! Oh, my own beloved! But in addition to all the happy things that have come into my mind this afternoon, there have been others that require earnest thought. But I cannot write them in a letter, a mere letter—to my distant love. Come soon!

Your B.

THE WHITE HART,  
*Sunday, June 15, 1930*

BELOVED,

The Medici print has arrived. Thank you so much for it. I am going to forget for once that you said the two faces were like me, or to take it only in the sense that the strongest and sweetest emotions (I can think of no other word) that a woman can feel, are reflected as in a mirror in their expression. Just as you said: the selfless bliss of love, the inconceivable joy of losing oneself utterly in the beloved, and the foreknowledge—like a dark background—of some unknown, nameless sorrow to be endured together. That double life we lead with those whom we love, whose existence in us dominates our own! Yes, it is incredible that a man could see all that and express it—not consciously thinking it out, it seems to me, but simply by means of vision. Do you not think so? That, I feel, is why his work is so true. Jürgen spent a long time looking at the Madonna, and then said thoughtfully:

"You know, Monna, I have only just realized that I am merely a little child to you, when you fuss over me."

And that reminds me that I have not yet said anything about Frieder. His picture stands on my writing-table and I am very fond of him, Ben; we are becoming greater friends every day in spite of your jealousy. Besides, I have no photograph of you. I shall ask Guy for a snapshot and then I am sure to receive it promptly. As I look at that picture, I am reminded of something that Ina Seidel once said about Goethe: "He is our brother and our friend, our father and our son." I thought that so fine and so true. Yes, our son, too. Not only father and brother. And the curious thing about it, is that men, in a sense, are more like boys than adolescent youths who are approaching manhood. I think that Frieder, who has a kind of exaltation about him, an anticipation of his coming dignity—quite unconsciously, for he is a modest lad and not in the least self-centred—was less of a boy than you are, Ben. Is this impertinent of me when you have just been reminding me that I belong to your son's generation? But looking at the picture of those women, one is conscious how free love is from the trammels of time. Age has nothing to do with it. When we love, we know all forms of love at once. One man can be son and father, friend and brother—as Ina Seidel says. That is what you meant by that charming English poem you quoted to me. Only, "son" is omitted, but I must put it in. "My son Ben." You can take it the other way, too, you know. "Thy elder sister I would be, thy mother, anything to thee." Can you find a use for this version?

We have thought of a wonderful occupation. Yesterday a friend from Berlin came to see us. Like Jürgen he belongs to an association of men who are interested in classical culture. They read the classics together. Some quite well-known men belong to it, such as Simons, the former Foreign Secretary. For a long time Jürgen, who is a very good classic, has been too busy to attend the meetings and he has missed them very much. They are reading Pindar at present, and Jürgen was seized with desire to do the same. So I went down to the

town, and, although it was Saturday afternoon, actually managed to rout out a copy of the Odes. I do not know enough Greek to read them easily, but Jürgen has no difficulty in translating them as he goes along, and we spent a wonderful pagan morning on the balcony with the first Pythian Ode. It seems to me that nowhere could you find sublimer poetry, a sublimer conception of humanity, or a sublimer company of men:

“Proudly set on their brows is the silver and green of the olive.”

Good heavens, when one thinks of the specimens that are running around nowadays—and especially those who arrogate themselves the right “to set the sail, the quivering sail!”

How ineffably glorious is the wisdom of the leaders! If only we could have again such a noble criticism of life as that contained in the King’s Ode:

“If any word, though trifling, chance to proceed from thee, ’twill be esteemed a great thing coming from thee. . . . Cleave unto that which is Beautiful. . . . Steer thy people with a rudder that guideth justly. . . . Strive above all to learn the Good. . . . The proper measure and standard of all things is thyself. . . . Rhadamanthys attained bliss because he acquired wisdom, the blameless fruit of thought, nor in his inmost heart did he take joy in the wiles of flatterers. . . . It is impossible for a crafty citizen to let fall one word, which will have the power to sway the good. . . . I shall be modest, when modest my estate, when great my fortune, I too shall be great. . . . Hammer thy tongue to a just temper on the anvil of Truth. . . . Trust not, friend, successes that are won by fraud.”

All this is contained and stored up in it, and everyone knows that it is the truth, the only truth that has stood the test. But all the leaders on earth have abandoned those standards, and do exactly what is contrary to them. The shabby war mentality of cunning, small-minded people, who are not concerned by what means they snatch an advantage over others! Surely we have degenerated terribly.

When I consider the uncontrolled conflict of internal politics—here in Saxony, next Sunday, the elections to the Landtag<sup>1</sup> take place, another antiquated absurdity—I often think that the ultimate cause of the evil is that our leaders have no standards, that there is no code of political honour, which would exclude a certain form of demagogism. It is stated, quite literally, quite frankly, that whatever succeeds is permissible. By success is meant a temporary victory won by sheer force by whatever group. In England things are rather better, because there is a governing class which is still under discipline and is united by common traditions. Such a class could not possibly exist with us. And that is why the soundness of individuals is of no avail; they have neither van nor rearguard; they cannot count on a loyalty based on a common sense of national responsibility, either in their opponents or their supporters. Even as they reach the goal, they are sure to receive “the dagger in the back.”

But it is a midsummer afternoon and I am writing to you, my beloved. Don't you think there is occasionally something rather depressing about a Sunday afternoon? It is sultry, and the overblown acacias are beginning to wilt. A cloud of dust is hovering over the Elbe valley. One feels a longing for wide sheets of water. We have reached a stage at which the doctor preaches patience. What did we really expect after two weeks? “Well, then. . . .” Jürgen is having all sorts of treatment to stimulate his vitality. He loathes it all. I sympathize with him. Convalescence with its necessary processes is a humiliating business.

And now something wonderful to end up with. Perhaps, perhaps (the jealous gods must not hear) we shall be allowed to go to the mountains in July for the second part of the cure. Jürgen has already suggested our staying on the Lake of Geneva, so that I may continue my work there. He must not be too high up—not more than three thousand feet—because of the danger of insomnia. In any case a certain amount of

<sup>1</sup> Diet.



risk is involved. But the doctor thinks it is worth taking. What do you say to Les Avants?

In fact, Ben, what do you say to the plan at all? I dare not yet open the gates that hold back the floods of joy. But behind them I can hear the surging of the waters; I must not give them scope to work their will. And yet, just for this one moment, I may let them have their way. I can feel them sweeping over me. And you, Beloved, you, too, feel them, do you not?

Jürgen sends you kind messages. He asked me if we could not read some passages out of your great book. I am ashamed to think that this had never occurred to me. Surely it must contain a great deal about your travels and your methods of research? Is it too technical for the lay reader? Can you send us a copy? Incomprehensible of me not to have asked you about it before. But there is never a moment when I am not with you.

Your MONICA

THE WHITE HART,  
*Monday, June 16, 1930*

BELOVED, BELOVED,

I have ploughed through a stiff morning's work—all that the intellectuals, in their boundless wisdom, had to say on the working of the Young Plan, and I have shared to the full Jürgen's indignation at that particular form of patriotic zeal combined with private opinionativeness.

"As if"—these words play a sinister rôle with us. We have invented the "As if" philosophy. Really a remarkable testimony on the part of the nation to its own mentality. Each individual theorizes about things, as if certain disquieting factors simply did not exist. "As if," for instance, we were free to dispose of them as we chose. Especially does each individual treat the realities, which his adversary deems important, as simply non-existent, and is perfectly happy in

consequence. And each man is trying to find an interpretation or construction of things, which has not occurred to anyone else. Thus everything disintegrates; the *jet d'eau* of spiritual force is dispersed in an invisible spray that can produce no effect. Within a year, all this literature, all this laborious output, will be utterly forgotten; it will disappear, leaving no mark on the development of events, "a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing."

And the firm conviction that out of all this mass of paper, it is only *morituri* who salute one, makes it so depressing to have to wade through the stuff. But as it plays a part, though an ephemeral one, in the discussions of the day, one has to worry one's way through it. With us—and it makes one sometimes positively dizzy—it is just that two worlds exist side by side: the world of fantasies and illusions, and the world of facts. And to-day these two worlds are such poles apart that it frightens one. And yet the first world possesses a quite sinister reality, because it represents a psychical, one may say *the* psychical, force. After the War, a friend of mine published anonymously an admirable little article showing how, during the War, all governments gradually became so completely enslaved by the psychological condition of their respective nations (a condition which had been fostered by their own propaganda) that they were no longer free to follow the dictates of their own intelligence. They had to preserve the illusion, even after it had fulfilled its purpose, when it had lost whatever utility it once possessed and could only propagate absurdities. And so it is to-day in internal affairs. Instead of the truth, political parties put before the people increasingly subtle, tendencious fallacies, which are simply calculated to catch votes. And then when it is necessary to take action there is, at the back of the unhappy people, no one who is able to assume the responsibility. The whole of popular opinion, whatever Babelish confusion may characterize it in every other respect, presents a solid and united front of opposition to the administration. The situation seems

to be becoming more and more obscure. In times of crisis such a system is simply unworkable.

And now, the sigh of relief, with which I pushed away that mountainous pile of books, has developed almost into a letter itself. And I meant to think and write about such very different things. Forgive me, Ben. When I began my letter I felt that I could jump up from my writing-table—with such a deep breath of joy—and for a little while seek you out, in your armchair by the fire, or under the lime-tree, if you should happen to be alone there. Do you know that I am actually a little frightened of your guests? Perhaps a little jealous, too. I hardly know. But really more frightened. A circle of English people is always so complacently absorbed in its own affairs and, quite unconsciously, so exclusive. You form—not you personally, Ben, of course—a kind of spiritual autarchy; you do not need outsiders, and really you have not much use for us Germans in particular. In fact no one has very much use for us nowadays. Sometimes I feel as if the whole amorphous mass of unused, stagnating German power were weighing like a heavy burden upon my soul. There is something of “the breath of stifled Titans” in the air. “The best falls to the ground, shaken down by evil counsels,” as Pindar says.

To be sure, your own timbers, too, are cracking. The consciousness of this is obvious from the whole tone of contemporary English literature. But it will not affect you so seriously, because you are on such good terms with each other. You have a certain recognized technique of life; you enviable people have a remarkable capacity for shaking off your cares. At least that is true of “society.” Of other classes, to be sure, but little is known.

I cannot think why I am writing all this dreary stuff. I really ought to stop, as I seem unable to reach cheerful regions, in spite of all my efforts. Only yesterday evening I succeeded in rousing Jürgen from a bad attack of depression, the result of a visit from an indiscreet colleague. In a case like

that you have the feeling that strength is pitted against strength. What you say does not matter; it is of no importance. The other person is simply conscious of an irradiating influence. You know, just like those last lines of the *Antennae* poem:

“What though the peasant, with pain and weary swink  
Toil while the Summer worketh its change in the seed!  
Little his labour profits. ’Tis the good Earth giveth the  
meed.”

But to be able to give like the bountiful earth, that is a matter of destiny, is it not, or in the language of Christianity, of grace. Perhaps to give is easier for those women who are not much concerned with great events, who can simply be the *ange du foyer*—just “something apart,” a blessed island in the midst of “pure culture.” Sometimes I feel, with a thrill of fear, what it means consciously to share the burden of this whole world of men, and yet to remain the bountiful earth.

No, Ben, I must stop now. I must not keep you here by Penelope’s weaving stool, watching me at the mournful task of unravelling. But will you comment on this letter, please, Ben? Then, another time when I feel depressed (but it seldom happens), I can turn up the right place in my breviary at once.

One last quotation from Pindar:

“We are the creatures of a day.  
Who can say what man is, or what he is not?  
Men are a dream-shadow,  
But when god-given glory descends on them,  
Then a bright radiance goes with them  
And a gentle life is their lot.”

Shed upon me a little of that god-given glory, Beloved, which men, they say, possess.

Your MONICA

LE PRÉ AUX MÉLÈZES,

Wednesday, June 18, 1930

MY ONLY BELOVED,

It is just sunrise. We have watched through the whole of a midsummer night, every second of which was lovely and vital. I am so full of it that I must write to you before the time comes to go riding. There are days when life flows so full and pure in its deep bed, so calm and rich; one must accept such times as a gift—the fullness, the golden abundance of the world! Your letter came yesterday, by the second post, on the top of a basket of roses they were just bringing into the house. What a fitting coincidence! I was longing from the bottom of my heart for your letter, that is what was so wonderful! Such a moment of joy should be celebrated deep, deep in the heart; all round me was movement and bustle—this quiet spot is now incredibly full of people—and amidst it all I was divinely alone. Alone with your letter! What more could I have asked than your splendid news that perhaps you will really come, and soon, as I have been hoping. There must be just the sort of place you want near Les Avants; I shall go up there to-day and write you about it. I am so thrilled by every word, every one of your sweet, wise words, that I hold your letter tight in my pocket, as though it were your hand. Yes, I am quite aware that I am now tasting the highest happiness, when one begs the passing moment to stay. According to Faust's theory the time has now come for me to be called away. And I could not complain, though I hope the strewer of poppy-seed, the bringer of sleep, will tarry a little, for it is so wonderful still to be awake.

Yesterday afternoon and evening were like music, Haydn, I think, this time—so many young people, so much summer and gaiety and hope. Constance's house is a model of dignified comfort. She still runs things rather as though two dozen brown-skinned, white-robed servants were silently at work behind the scenes. I admire the skill with which she still plays the *burra memsahib* with a domestic staff so greatly

reduced. The young people helped her very well, however, not so much the girls as the young men, for that is our custom. I think it a good one. There is nothing better for a shy, awkward boy than to have to put his shoulder to the wheel and do his best to make other people feel comfortable and at ease. It rubs off the corners, as we say in England; it licks him into shape. Its educational value lies in the fact that it is all taken for granted. The tact and grace with which the women direct it and accept it all as the natural thing give just the required tone. The opening of this fine house provided a delightful accompaniment to the storm of happiness within me; for, so God will, you will stay there when you return, at least for a few days in each week, when you are working down here in the libraries. I have not yet said anything to Constance of our wonderful plan; she was so busy that I could hardly say two words to her without being interrupted. I stuck to Jim, who, with his pipe, is a rock of unshakable steadiness in all the storms that blow. We decided that these young people did not make a bad showing for the old country. But we must collect more young folk from elsewhere. At present the British Empire is over-represented. They say there is a very nice Chinaman and they want to bring him along, but that will not satisfy me; I am looking for more young Europeans, if possible Germans and Frenchmen. For I see more and more that everywhere it is the young generation that is really important and really reassuring. Only it must get to grips with things. Young people must get to know each other, must learn to see their problems more comprehensively, must understand each other far more. What are the schools and universities doing? What are we still waiting for? What else has to happen before we throw aside trivialities and bring the real essentials into the foreground, ready to fight for them with the knowledge that an epoch is dying and another arising in its place, that the "plan of the mighty drama," as that wise Spaniard Ortega y Gasset says, which is to be played in the years to come, is

simply this: Will Europe come to understand itself?—"Europe," even in the countries of the New World, for their civilization has its roots over here. Of course you know Ortega y Gasset's *Revolt of the Masses*. I have been reading it all the morning with Pat, who is quite thrilled by this philosopher. I was very pleased again with my two Canadians. Anne Nielsen brought me a volume of modern American verse, which was quite new to me. I must let you see some of it when you come, darling. She and MacAlister recited a few things by Vachel Lindsay, who seems to be a very original fellow. He tramped about the country, paying for his board and lodging by giving away little books of poems, printed and illustrated with great talent by himself. *Rhymes to be Traded for Bread*. He tries to get his listeners to speak them or rather sing them with him, for his rendering is so rhythmic that it is rather song than speech, a revival of the old English chanting. These two are very good at it; they overflow in every direction with vitality and temperament. Young people from abroad are to me an inexhaustible source of knowledge and experience. One gains more impressions in a few hours than one could get from days of reading. And how much there is that one has never even heard of! The day I spent with these young women and men has been most refreshing. Maisie and Nell and a number of their friends want to do Morris dances and other old English folk dances on the big lawn here in a few days' time. I am very glad of it. One rarely sees such things and I love a good dancer. One can understand again now how it was that all through the Middle Ages the English were known and respected as dancers, for England to-day is perhaps nearer to what it was at the Renaissance than it has been for centuries.

We began very early in the evening—and when I say "we," I mean we—for I am passionately fond of modern dances. When I came back from India as an old man and saw them for the first time, I realized that dancing had become something quite different, for when I was young I hated it and

refused to have anything to do with it. Perhaps that was because of my exceptional height—or God knows there may have been some other reason—but I felt thoroughly miserable: the tempo was either too slow or too fast, and the movements quite unnatural and, in those conventional days, very stiff and affected, so I ran away from it whenever I could. But I find the modern dances most enjoyable. They are entirely different; some are really a kind of sleep-walking, and they provide everyone with what he wants, leaving room for poise and individuality and an infinite variety of expression. I looked forward to dancing with you, Monica darling, almost more than riding—and I still look forward to it with indescribable eagerness! I hardly dared think of it. The first notes that came from the house went to my head like a marvellous wine. I had to stay outside for a while in the shadows of the garden; my longing for you was so overmastering!

Jim likes to look down on me from the eminence of five years' seniority and call me "my boy," but he is as fond of dancing as I am. We took it in a leisurely way but it went on all night. Then the youngsters slipped away in assorted pairs—not so wisely assorted as the sympathetic spectator might have wished, but probably that is always so, though in this case there are special complications. My poor Pat is in a bad way. But I do not want to speak of it now, I do not want to think or write of anything but you, or rather us! For you are mine, mine! If only you knew what that little word at the end of your letter has meant to me. The sluice-gates of the stream of happiness! The surging of the waters! And you must not "give them scope to work their will." What am I to say to that? What can I give scope to work its will in me? And you ask me what I think! What can I, what may I, think? It seems to me that I cannot endure another day here until I have asked you that question, looking into your lovely, candid eyes. You must come soon, or I shall have to come to Dresden! For a long time I have been fighting against the temptation to come to you, to see you, though only from



a distance, to walk about those strange streets among all those strange people, only to be near you! Perhaps I could visit your brother—there is nothing impossible about it—I could find something to do in Dresden, indeed I have cousins there. Many times I have been so tempted, dangerously, acutely! Nothing has saved me but self-discipline, that salutary force with which we subdue our impulses, and I feel that you too walk in the paths of discipline, that you too regard it as a kind of hygiene of the soul. But now I must know how long I have to wait, or I shall be able to bear it no longer. But I know from your letter that it will not be long. Now I am going to get into a very hot bath. I learnt in Japan that a bath of “boiling” water is the most refreshing thing there is, provided you can stand it. And then Selim! We have a little Australian mare, Bess, which the Hargreaves had sent out as a polo-pony. Unfortunately she could not stand the journey and needs quite a time in the paddock to recover and get into form again. She is too intelligent to be shipped off like an ox. That is a good thing about horses; I am always glad when they react in such a personal way to the lordly dispositions of their owners. Ellen Hargreaves tells me that Bess is an ideal saddle-horse. I am taking her with me on a leading-rein; a sharp trot with Selim is just what she needs.

This afternoon I am going up to Les Avants. I must get rid of all these people and be alone with you. How heavenly! I have always enjoyed it up there. One looks down “into mistier and mistier depths,” as I have just read in Goethe, written in June 1770!

Your BEN

WHITE HART HOTEL,

*Morning, Wednesday, June 18, 1930*

It is very early, Beloved. The sun is only just up. The veil of mist over the Elbe valley is slowly dissolving in its rays. The birds, which burst into song at three in the morning,

are silent again. How beautiful it is, that salute to life each morning, before the day begins to run its course! And now that it is really morning, after that wonderful midsummer night, I must tell you about it, Ben.

I stayed out on the balcony, fascinated at first by the gradual gathering of that wave of darkness, under the strange, transparent brightness with which the sky is suffused on these long midsummer days. Night! How near, how living it is, how touching and consoling, when all through the hard, bright day one has been longing for that "blue oblivion." It lifts you gently, like the rising tide—"only the play of the waves all round"—you are wafted out of the land of men into another element. So strange it is to feel the direct influence of the great, unattainable, cosmic powers. All this is expressed so marvellously in "Tristan"—the impelling force of the flow of night, these waves, each of them rising anew from the uttermost depths. That music comes back to one of its own accord, if for once one surrenders oneself utterly to the night. And then the stars! They were small and remote, for the day had been hot and the sky was hazy. But I could make out the constellations and watch them revolving. It is an indescribable experience to let the great march of the worlds, through infinite space, sweep past overhead—and to feel in mystic unison. Everything becomes so wonderfully simplified. In the presence of that sublime procession, only the starry paths of the soul remain; everything else is absorbed into the night and becomes insubstantial.

Yes, Ben, I felt that nothing was important, except the great forces of destiny, which our hearts obey—just as when we were together in the meadow of narcissi. I can never again see the night sky above my head and not be reminded of it, Beloved. But I wanted to tell you that even here, all alone under the wide sky, my heart has stood the test, and that I carry with me that deep certainty which transcends everything.

And the coming of day was so exquisite: the soft rustling

of the leaves, beginning in the valley and rising upwards; and here, above the treetops, the sighing of the breeze, which was fraught with all the sweetness of the night. And the landscape growing imperceptibly lighter as the sky overhead became more transparent. Piety and grace and divine cheerfulness, such as no words can describe.

Now I am really tired. How lovely it would be, Ben, to feel just at this moment, the touch of your lips upon my eyes.

MONICA

ROCHERS DE NAYE,

*Evening, Wednesday, June 18, 1930*

A day of faery beauty, Beloved! "A day of grace," yes, like a day of harvest! It began without effort and without plan, when your sweet Monday's letter arrived, and I saw the chance of taking it with me into solitude. I seized this gift of fate with an eagerness I cannot describe. Immediately after breakfast I set out for Les Avants. The neighbours and guests were busy with undertakings of their own. Guy was invited to spend the whole day with the Hargreaves. I was very glad for him to have the company of a boy of his own age. No one needed me, not even Pat, who reads with me now every morning to polish up his German, which seems very sensible of him. But this morning he was fetching some books from the library and decided to spend the day in town, where he has many acquaintances at the Club. As I was setting out I luckily remembered to tell them that if it suited me up here I might stay the night. So now I am free—with your letter, with my thoughts of you, with all the innumerable things I have to say to you since that enchanting letter arrived. I think it is the best you have ever written me! For it came straight from your mind and heart, as though while speaking to me you were really speaking to yourself. So the living, unforgettable note of your dear voice is in it. There are little inflections, little variations of tempo, just

as you would speak, pause and speak again, that brought you back to me. Yes, I needed to get right away again, to be quite alone with you. I could not stand it for another day. All the way up I felt so free, so happy, as though you were really with me in the car; it was delightful not to have to speak, just to listen to our words as we spoke together in my heart. At Les Avants I saw some rooms in case you should prefer them to a big hotel. You have only to let me know what you want, for I can safely advise you regarding the places noted in the enclosed list. The situation is enchanting and only a thousand metres above sea level, though one can hardly believe it, so lovely is the view. The house I have specially marked has, I think, the finest view, and the rooms have large verandahs so arranged that one is quite private. One can take one's meals either in the house or in the hotel, according to taste. You will want to be sure that your brother is being properly fed while you are staying with Constance, and I think he will be well looked after. But you can live quite comfortably in the hotels, and it might be as well not to be alone too much. A little pressure from without is good for one. Les Avants has its own loyal clientele and is not one of the cosmopolitan resorts. I was delighted afresh by the infinite beauty of the mountains. After I had sauntered through the charming village—the meadows must be even more beautiful than those of Gex when the narcissi are out—there was still time for me to drive down to Glion and thence, such was my thirst for snow and distance, up to the Rochers de Naye. Here I shall spend the night. I climbed up to the summit in the clear evening sunshine. Such was my desire for you, that the beauty of the spot would have been almost heartbreaking, had not your letter been with me, filling me with a sense of your presence, keeping my mind engaged with thoughts of you. I am sitting outside the hotel; the wonderful panorama lies before me in the warm summer light, the Alps with the Dent du Midi, the peak of Mont Blanc, the whole range of the Waadtländer Alps and behind

them the Wetterhorn and Finsteraarhorn. I think I can make out the Jungfrauoch gleaming in the distance. And at my feet the terraced landscape sinks into mistier depths, and below is the lake.

The characteristic feature of this landscape seems to be that a great deal of thinking has been done here; everything fosters a motion of the mind that is strengthening and liberating, and it seems to me, Beloved, that these great distances with their, so to say, thoughtful beauty, will be so good for a man like your brother, whose mind has battered itself for years against the deadly irrationality of our times. I am heartily glad that he is coming. Will you tell him that from me? And give him my sincere and brotherly greetings. I cannot express in words how wonderful I find that sisterly quality which seems to be the essence of your being. To-day the impression of it is so strong that it has even numbed the prick of jealousy in me; I can scarcely feel it, and generally I feel it so keenly when I think of those who are "yours" in the truest sense—your brother and your friend. There are other friends too, but he is the most intimate. He called you "sister-mother." I cannot think of the word without feeling the icy breath that chilled my vernal happiness when you told me that morning in your letter why you had suddenly been called away. And when that call came nothing else could raise an echo in your heart. It affected me deeply in all the sorrow and disappointment of the moment. And my sorrow was such as I cannot describe to you: for the first time in my life the great catastrophe had come, the roof had fallen about my ears and I was in darkness. I remember that this was the very thing I had to realize, though I could hardly believe it! Goethe has expressed it with wonderful truth. I quote from memory, but I think it is accurate: "Against all else I had a deliverance within me, but not against that." That is it literally. Perhaps no man can ever express the profound emotion with which he realizes, in the midst of a desperate struggle for his love, this essential quality of woman, this

sisterliness, the power to go to her brother and take from him without a word what he cannot bear alone, to take upon her shoulders the burden that slips from his and bear it for him, because she is as strong as, or stronger than, he. This sympathy, this understanding help of which you speak—if only you knew what it means to a man, and how he searches for it all his life and often in vain! The man who has never known this virtue in woman has missed all that is best in life. If there were anything that could make me love you, revere you, long for you more than I do, it would be your way of bearing the burden for and among your friends, for and among your fellow countrymen. I love you beyond measure in your strength, your richness, the pure, strong will which makes you so free and queenly! I say now, as the neediest of your friends, banished far from you, the one for whom one day you must answer the question to be or not to be, as your lover, I say that you are blessed and shall be blessed in every hour of your life.

You know, darling, this English exclusiveness you have rightly noticed is really so naïve and unintentional that it has something of the behaviour that healthy children and healthy animals show among themselves. It is the same kind of innocence, if I may say so. We do not understand it ourselves. It comes of our insularity. All people who live on islands, even the smallest, have something of it. They regard the man from the mainland as a foreigner, though they may know him as well as their next-door neighbour. We are not self-sufficing. As soon as we English begin to think, we need other people much more than is commonly supposed. But we have a kind of natural, protective shell: the Englishman who embraces too fully the habits of other vigorous nations often goes to the dogs. I expect you have heard the proverb: *Inglese italianato é diavolo incarnato*. One of the wisest and most gifted women of our times, Eleonora Duse, whom I knew for many years, once told me that Englishmen who had settled in Italy or France always seemed queer to her,

however much she liked them personally; they were somehow daemonic; barriers had been broken down, energies had been released, which only the strongest mind could control and direct. Goethe said he was conscious of powers within himself that were capable of destroying both him and those around him. The instinctive need of building up firm and permanent barriers against these ultimate possibilities plays a great part in English education. The typical English qualities, which have now become conventionalized, are cultivated for the purpose of keeping the dangers of the unknown and untried at arm's length. And even this complacent absorption in our own affairs—how well those words express it—this easy way we have with each other seems to me—I hope I am not being conceited—an excellent quality. We are tolerant. We regard each other with good will. Perhaps that, too, comes of living on an island and being so dependent on each other. Shakespeare describes it:

“This happy breed of men! This little world!”

But in the course of centuries so many foreigners, who were not born on “the fortress built by Nature for herself,” have found a home and struck root in English soil. I am anxious to take you over to England with me some time—just you and I! That is one of my deepest desires, and I have a good many! Now would be the right time. The timbers are cracking ominously, and our young people are well aware of it. You must let them tell you all about it some time. Young Englishmen and English girls are quite unconventional, even in their attitude to the old country; they criticize progress or the lack of it at home with a freedom that would give an orthodox patriot an apoplectic fit. But the orthodox patriot is a poor creature wherever you find him. This unsparing criticism seems to me a welcome sign that things will go on in the good old way, by evolution rather than by revolution. Changes come unnoticed—that is still typical of England. A witty Frenchman once made a very trenchant

remark to me. In France, he said, one can still say: "*Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose.*" But in England one should say: "*Plus ça reste, plus c'est autre chose.*" Not only in society but also among the common people one finds that sturdy good-humoured persistence, that habit of sticking together and clinging to what has been tried and proven even where we may be in the wrong. Then perhaps especially: a sense of fair play and a sense of humour—not bad foundations for national stability! The real danger lies in the tragic impotence to which the country has been condemned by ill-starred political leadership, which failed to avoid the World War and the Treaty of Versailles. This inertia is poisoning the natural energies of the nation; it is a sin against the spirit. In this morbid atmosphere the country loses its strength and vigour, its ability to throw off unfavourable conditions, its unconscious technique of living whatever the circumstances, and these are the qualities that have enabled it to survive in the past. If good temper, the most precious thing that English education gives to our children (even to those who do not possess it by nature and have not acquired it at home), if that is lost, the nation will be incomparably poorer.

This morning Guy wasted a whole film in taking snapshots of me. He obeys you to the letter, you see. He was going to develop them to-day, so perhaps there will be something to see when I get home to-morrow. But what of you? Who sends me snapshots of you? Who cares for me and my wishes? I would give anything for a good photograph of you. But I am frightfully exacting. I should want at least half a dozen first-rate photographs showing you as I see you in my mind's eye—so dear! Dear and lovely beyond words!

I have written much of this on the verandah. The stars are shining clear above the mountains. It is night. Sweetest, I long for you unspeakably! Is it true that you once kissed me? That you once lay close to my shoulder and shut your eyes beneath my kisses? No! I cannot believe it. I dare not believe it! Otherwise I should have to set off on foot this very night



and take the first train to you. I must go on sitting here, foolish and tame and dull, disbelieving in all that happiness! I must think of nothing and believe nothing, and sleep—if possible! Oh Monica—Monna! I repeat that name reverently under my breath—the name given you by “the others.” It is beautiful! It is sensible! I could kill the fellow who first thought of it, but I assume—I must assume!—that it was your brother and, if so, all is well. The old Adam, you see, is rampaging to-day, yes, far worse than he confesses to you!

Your BEN

THE WHITE HART,  
*Saturday, June 21, 1930*

Your letter, Ben, from your heights was so lovely and so comforting—“full of sweetness, more potent than the honeycomb,” says Pindar, as his highest praise of man. My ship is in full sail again, Beloved, and it steers by the compass of the heart. In spite of the tiny, ominous cloud which arises at the end of your letter.

The name “Monna” goes back to my childhood. Perhaps it was I myself who was clever enough, at the age of one or two, to invent it. So you need not thirst for anybody’s blood—beloved, necessitous one. Why, I had already offered to be “sister and mother” to you, in my version of your English poem. That had not struck you. Perhaps you never even noticed it. Men are sometimes so curiously hard of hearing. At the end of your letter I felt so much “sister and mother” to you, that it almost disturbed my peace of mind. I kept saying to myself: Is he never going to bed—after dancing all night (How I look forward to dancing a whole night through with you!), and inspecting hotels, not to mention all the rest of it: Selim and the expedition to Grat? You were so wound up that you seemed not to be able to “give over” as the country people say. And I had such a burning desire, Beloved, to give you a good-night kiss, which should soothe

you to sleep. Not to banish thought, but to shed upon you deep, balmy slumber, as when I came to see you after your accident. No words could express my joy at what you wrote then: about the sleep of eternity, lulled by the surge of mighty waves. Do you know Pindar's Odes? I must copy out this passage, in case you do not possess them—because it is the most beautiful illustration I can think of.

“O golden Lyre, owned equally by Apollo and the dark-haired Muses, thou for whom the advancing Chorus hearkeneth, overture of festal joy! And the singers mark thy rhythm, when thy quivering strings announce the prelude of the strains that lead the dance. Even the ever-burning flames of the peaked thunderbolt are quenched by thee, and the eagle, ruler of birds of prey, sleeps on the sceptre of Zeus and his swift wings droop on either side. Thou veilest his bending head with a dark cloud, shedding sweet bondage on his eyelids. And as he slumbers, his bent shoulders heave at the rapture of thy plangent notes.”

I wish I could have been that dark cloud to you that evening. Perhaps, after all, I was.

I believe you were trying to drive out my own small devil to which I confessed on Monday—that feeling of shyness towards your friends—with the help of Beelzebub himself. I almost feel a little frightened. Believe me, Ben, when I got back to the Carlton that morning and found that letter from Berlin lying on my table, it was just as bitter a blow to me as to you. I sent you Volker's letter because I wanted you to understand the psychological aspect of the case as well—I thought you ought to. The whole truth and nothing but the truth. That sounds, by the way, much too pathetic. Not an eyelid of mine would quiver at the thought that you were aware of all the ramifications of my inner life, if only I were sure that the old Adam would take them at their proper value. But it seems that the old Adam is lurking, dangerous and incalculable, in the deep ravines of fate. The emotions have their own dark logic. With them, as in politics, there

are two truths. I am almost inclined to ask you whether it would be better for us not to come. No. Because of that question I nearly tore up this letter. But let it stand. I want you to know everything, even this slight touch of uneasiness which I could not help feeling. But I take back the question. We must live through this. I have already told you, Beloved, I accept with full consciousness all the fateful consequences (I use the phrase in the seriousness which Goethe gives it) of our meeting.

Perhaps it is wiser to leave certain things alone and to ignore them. But I cannot do this. I cannot simply pass over the feelings you express, or even those that I can read between the lines, as if they did not exist. And shall I say just one thing more, Beloved, about that touching sentence in your letter, referring to the answer which I must some day give you? I know already what that answer will be. How else could I have wandered with you along that blissful path? But now you must help me, too, as you did when you sent Jürgen that brotherly message.

I think we shall decide on Les Avants. Volker is coming in July to pay Jürgen a short visit, that is to say if the political situation permits. A crisis has already arisen; the Minister of Finance has sent in his resignation. It is, of course, very distressing for Jürgen that a new Chief should take over while he is likely to be away for a long time yet. The Reichstag will certainly sit all through July. There are emergency measures of a drastic nature to be passed—that is inevitable.

My deepest thanks, Ben, Beloved, for everything in your letter, beginning with all the trouble you have taken about Les Avants. The best thing of all, however, was your endorsement of my scheme of life and of all that it contains. From the woman's point of view that happens seldom nowadays, more seldom perhaps than the contrary. It will often help me. And I am no longer afraid. I shall feel as I felt that first time in Geneva: because I am near to you, I shall be near the others, too. I am actually looking forward to meeting

your young people. Certainly anyone who wishes to do so may write to me. But it is easier to exchange ideas in talking than in writing. And it will not be long now. I must write those words again: It will not be long now. Then once more "hands that bless will lift the shining bowl."

God keep you,  
Your MONNA

LE PRÉ AUX

*Monday, June 23, 1930*

Sweetheart—that is what I have continually called you in my thoughts during these letterless days. Every day I expected a sign of life, the confirmation of that starry plan of yours to come to Les Avants. In my anxiety I have had no peace for writing, but my mind has been busy with you all the time. The long-awaited letter came at last to-day, and I can cling to my belief that fate still intends that miraculous deed of mercy. . . . I really believe that your brother would benefit substantially from a stay in Les Avants, and that is the chief thing at present. It seems to me that the cheerfulness and security of the place, the grace and richness and nobility of the landscape, where everything is so far removed from all violence and oppression, must be healing to a mind suffering from the harshness and stupidity of to-day. I know him very little, but some people, one feels, one has known before and need only "recognize." I am glad to say that that is how I feel towards your brother. Reading your letter, I felt I was in a garden in springtime, when, though the sun is still shining, a little sharp wind, perhaps with a scud of rain, will sweep over your bare head. But that feeling did not come from you—oh, my queen, you are in the true sense bewitching in your gentle goodness!—it came from my own uneasy and jealous heart, from that passion which seeks with zeal for something to make it suffer. All those are necessary stages for the old Adam. Fate has made things too easy for

him so far, and has never sent a great wind to churn up the "still waters." It is true, you see, that "still waters run deep." My darling, here in my big armchair I hold you close to my heart, I hold you tight, breathlessly happy in that wonderful sentence from your letter—and yet I know the sharp blade may still fall, bringing inconceivable disaster! I have no rest or peace, but that, I suppose, is inevitable. Yes, it is true that still waters run deep. I never knew *how* deep! And now when the great wind bursts suddenly upon me—as happens sometimes here on the lake, where it blows differently and incalculably from every valley, the many-named wind, enough winds for a whole science!—I realize with surprise that it remixes the very elements of which one is composed. I pass in and out of my own house, among my own people, inwardly far away, learning to know myself. You see that is how I suffer alone and far from you. Is it not time for you to come back and, at least, look on with sympathy? I am ready for anything; I am prepared to rejoice heaven-high or be cast down hell-deep, whatever fate demands, if only you will come, if only you will come!

When I came down on Thursday morning from Rochers de Naye, there was a letter from Anne Nielsen, begging me to lend her one of your books if I had one. You see, there is an example of our "autarchy." I have three of your books, thank God, but it was asking too much to expect me to lend them. Still, I have some fellow-feeling for that serious young woman with her flair for what is really good, so I sent her the *Wasserscheide der Sozialpolitik* to go on with, for that comes nearest in subject to the lectures you gave here, which made such a deep impression on her. By the way, she has published a rather good little study of the condition of working women in Canada, and spent a few months herself working in a factory to learn things from the inside. She is coming in this evening with Maisie to discuss the legal bases of the labour contract, with special regard to the problem of unemployment. I am appallingly ignorant of such matters, but

I am to be allowed to stay and listen. I have already found out that they know their job.

I am so glad you are looking forward to meeting my young people, sweetest! Last night I was arguing with Pat till the early hours. I see more and more clearly that he is in a dangerous state, and I would not trust him alone anywhere just at present. Constance has been playing a risky game; she does not seem to have realized that it is not safe to experiment with a man of his temperament—there is a rashness in his blood inherited from his Irish mother. I had no idea that he and Nell Cameron had been through a difficult period together. Nell, of course, is our little star; at twenty-one she has become England's darling, and, what is more, deserves it. At the end of last season in London she woke up one morning, like Byron, to find herself famous. Well, these two were engaged, or at least were regarded by both families and their whole circle of friends as about to become engaged. She is Constance's niece and has therefore seen a lot of Pat from early childhood, for they lived close together in the Surrey hills. Pat is a young man of exceptional gifts and, as his uncle's private secretary and putative heir, with a safe political career in front of him, he was by English standards a "catch" for a girl whose father had been killed in the War and whose mother had nothing but a small pension. Nell probably never gave it a thought; she lived a sort of somnambulistic existence till the outcrop of her great dramatic talent revealed her to herself. She did what she was bid, unconsciously obeying her call, a strange elfin creature, at rest within herself, but never fitting into the common scheme of things. She seemed scarcely subject to the laws of this world and, with her great talent and still untroubled heart, she looked on indifferently at the great, hopeless passion that was consuming the boy. While they were drawing farther and farther apart, something else was happening to him: he found himself increasingly opposed to his patron and political chief; his faith in the whole structure of our political life began to

waver, and consequently he found himself isolated from his former friends. It is a strange situation: they see each other every day; they still keep up the light friendly tone towards each other which they have had since childhood, but he has become a man, and now he is confronted by the gravest decision and cannot confide in her. She is immersed, almost inevitably, in the unconscious, intuitive adaptations which her art demands of her. He told me she played Juliet in such a way that he was tortured by a feeling that he had never really known her before. He loves her so much that he cannot get free of her, at least not yet. All this being so, he should never have come here. I knew nothing of it, but Constance hoped that the summer days spent in each other's company would help to bring them together. I must see whether I can get Maisie, with all her healthy common sense, to give me her views of the matter. But young people have their own loyalties, which must be respected.

The English newspaper reporters have discovered us. They have had orders to photograph Nell Cameron "and friends" as comprehensively as possible, and to entice her into making as many statements as they can of the sort interesting to their particular public. She does it very simply and graciously, and Constance is a splendid watchdog; she intercepts people, entertains them and sends them away quite happy though but little wiser. We were within a hair's breadth of all being photographed in an idyllic group on the bathing beach by the *Sunday Express* man. Pat saw him coming, and we dived and swam like dolphins till we were out of danger. His bag consisted of Nell and Maisie and the cheerfully grinning Bertrand. They ought to look well. I should like you to have seen them all together here; they are in their way good examples of a current type, and you could have told me how they compare with their opposite numbers in Germany. I am constantly struck by the similarities existing between young people of different nationalities. They are often hardly distinguishable and that applies not only to their outward

appearance: young Englishmen, Frenchmen, Scandinavians and Italians are frequently as alike as brothers both physically and mentally. And this is even more noticeable with the girls. I remember noticing young women of exactly the same type as my little Anne Nielsen—blonde, intelligent, thoroughly feminine despite the boyish coiffure—that evening outside the university and the Institute of Politics in Berlin. There is also an inner bond between them, a remarkable similarity in their attitude to the problems of their own lives. We, I think, were much more incoherent at their age. By the same strange telepathy they know all about each other, despite the barriers of frontiers. You realize this as soon as you see them together. And yet at the present day the nations are becoming more and more isolated and divided, at least externally, and mental and economic autarchy is one of the fashionable slogans. When you are here, darling, we must get the youngsters to talk on these lines. It seems to me that something is being worked out that needs carefully observing. Nell Cameron has been invited to stay with friends in the Engadine. That is a blessing for Pat. He must get rid of his present excessive tension. I can sympathize with him only too well. I think he was surprised to find me so knowledgeable about his moods and depressions. A few months ago I could not have shared them so understandingly or sincerely. There are certain sympathies which one cannot feign; they must come spontaneously from the substance of one's own life, if they are to have any effect on others. We ride together, swim, work in the garden—not as amateurs but seriously, rolling up our sleeves and doing all the rough jobs. He is like a younger brother, frank and trustful—in my therapy I shall continue to apply the prescriptions I have tried on myself. But, physician, heal thyself! Where should I be if every letter you write did not bring me the only healing balm? Yet I must accept everything, the sudden wind, too, the prospect of hailstorms—whatever may come, the buffets of fate from without, the need for understanding from



within—that stern objective understanding that comes to me sometimes in the night, though I have not the courage to look it straight in the face! I must accept it all, and confess that if my life were to end to-morrow it would have been justified by that one word in your letter! You would not have travelled this happy path with me, had you not known the answer to the deepest question of my heart. . . . Monna! When a word like that has been spoken, a man knows that he has lived, and all else is grace. “*Sehen wir die Bahn auch nicht, die unserm Lauf das Schicksal zog für einen Tag—noch wenn es Nacht wird.*”

I have only my little English textbook of Pindar. Can you bring the Hölderlin translation with you? I wish you would. You see, darling, I am already counting on the fulfilment of my extravagant hope! Let me know soon what you decide. Constance, with admirable obstinacy, has succeeded in resisting all attempts to invade the room you are to occupy. It is a fine, big room with a long balcony, its own steps into the garden and a whole cascade of roses, intoxicatingly scented, blooming over the windows. Yesterday I steered Jim in that direction and we sat down under your windows, while he explained to me the importance of irrigation for the forests of Eastern Bengal. It was most impressive.

Are you coming to me again this evening in the big arm-chair—as you once wrote—for a good-night kiss? Oh, Monna!

Your BEN

THE WHITE HART,

Wednesday, June 25, 1930

BELOVED,

The doctor has just been; he approves of our move to Les Avants. On the whole Jürgen is doing reasonably well. The change in him is beginning to be noticeable. We go for walks together and early this morning we went for a ride on the common. But we are beginning to realize that

at this time of the year the climate is somewhat enervating. It is certainly not bracing. We shall probably leave here on Monday and go first to the Grand Hotel at Les Avants. Will you come to Montreux, Ben, to meet us? It would be too lovely! I shall go up to Les Avants with Jürgen first of all. I have already written to Constance. Perhaps later in the week I can come down to Geneva to look round. Will you come up and fetch me? You might even come up a little sooner. Oh, Ben, couldn't you stay on with us, after meeting us at Montreux, so that we could have a couple of days together before driving down to Geneva? Is it wrong of me to try to dispose of you beforehand like this? But I cannot bear the thought that when I have you again—I use the phrase intentionally, in its fullest possible meaning—when I have you again, Beloved, I am to say good-bye to you so soon, after only a few hours together. These weeks have been too long for that! And Jürgen, too, is looking forward to you. It will be much easier for you to lift him out of all these troubles, which are so near us while we are here—far too near for the peace of mind of a man like Jürgen, who is for the present unable to help. And then I have great faith in the healing influence of the Swiss scenery. I picture to myself what it will be like to feel the anxiety in the one scale growing lighter and lighter, while in the other the joy of love grows heavier and heavier, in long days and nights, Beloved.

Guy has sent me his snapshots. I am writing to thank him this very day. A whole collection! And I have arranged them in an ascending scale with those I like best at the bottom. My favourite comes last. I will not confess how often (for there are no limits to the amount of primitive feeling it helps one to work off) I go through them from beginning to end. The last one, my favourite, was an act of guile on the part of that ingenious lad. He did not show it to “the governor,” because he was afraid that if you saw it you would not let him send it. With your pipe in your mouth, you are pottering about with a wheelbarrow full of stuff, which you are taking

to the rubbish heap. Your hands are just as I love to see them; the wrists are braced against the shafts of the wheelbarrow and your hands look so slim and aristocratic in contrast with the rough wood, which they grip so firmly. You must grant him absolution, Ben, for his arbitrary but discriminating conduct. He has mine a hundred times over.

I am looking forward so much to seeing you in the middle of your large party of guests, in the character of master of the house and general confidant and protector. It is, I think, a fine and interesting part for a man to play. It was in that rôle—master of Le Pré aux Mélézes, dear, unforgettable Mr. B. Tarland—that I first fell so hopelessly in love with you. It was strange—it was almost a revelation—that such a thing could happen so spontaneously. You must tell me some day how things are run behind the scenes. I am a bit of a housewife myself, you must know. But the charm, Ben, that you exerted as host—I felt its extraordinary potency when you talked to me about Guy. That was the bridge by which I crossed into the region of serious love.

But of that, and how it all happened, we have still much to tell each other. I am looking at the plan of Les Avants, and choosing all the paths and places where we shall wander, exchanging confidences, in just a few days' time. I am dwelling on all the hours out of the twenty-four that I may claim for my own—"the time and the place and the loved one altogether."

Au revoir. "Break not, oh bridge!"

Your M.

LE PRÉ AUX MÉLÈZES,  
*Friday, June 27, 1930*

MY OWN BELOVED,

For the first time for days I am up here again in my room in the tower, and though I was burning with impatience to write to you, I have been sitting a long time at the window

with my head in my hands, and all I can think is this: My own beloved! My own beloved! I have never felt anything like this before. It was like a moan of overflowing happiness. Words and heartbeat were one; never has a feeling expressed itself so compellingly in sound. That must be why the words came first, almost incoherently, in my own language. It is not only that you are coming—in only four days—but I am to go up with you, because you “cannot bear the thought”—your own words, my sweetest!—of my leaving you again after a few hours. How can a man find room in his heart for so much happiness? I remember quite clearly that that was the feeling I had when your first letter came, nearly three months—three eternities!—ago. I wrote my first letters to you with a heart that trembled and “gasped beneath the assault of last year’s storms,” groping my way from one excuse to another, fearful lest the gossamer thread should snap. Then your letter came, and with it the feeling that there was no room inside me for what had entered. To-day the wonderful sheaf of your letters lies before me, my heart has expanded with each one and yet it is still too small to comprehend the rapture of this moment.

This is not a letter. You are here in my arms and I am telling you everything, all the suffering and privation these weeks have meant for me, all the hunger and yearning of my heart. I do not know how I managed to survive these weeks without you. But now it is over. I feel you place your hand across my lips so lightly and reassuringly—as you did in the last moment of farewell on that disastrous afternoon—silencing me with the kiss I pressed on those sweet, comforting fingers.

Early this morning Constance came over to me with your letter. She shares all my pleasure at the prospect of your brother’s coming. I myself have had only a fleeting glimpse of your home, and Constance is all agog to know more of the brother-sister arrangement. “Now we shall see something of the men-folk of that delightful creature,” she said happily.

She counts your friend as one of the family, and I think she is right.

Anne Nielsen came to bring back your book and took away with her your *Paradoxie der Weltwirtschaft*. In Canada it is quite a tradition that the original languages of the parents should be preserved: her mother comes of a German family and so they speak German. This is very different from America where languages are quickly lost. I am reading a lot of German with her and Pat, and we are quite set on verse. I have a theory, which indeed is already well proven by practice, that one learns languages easily and well by studying poetry and if possible learning it by heart. A poem teaches one much more of the essence of a language than pages of prose. Pat is for very short poems; eight lines are about his limit—the *Fichtenbaum* is a great favourite. We also favour *Feldeinsamkeit* in the Brahms text. Anne is prepared to go in for something longer, and the “lessons” are most amusing.

Now I shall take my revenge and ask Guy to take as many private and unauthorized snapshots of you as he possibly can. He can make use of his stalking powers as a boy scout. I am quite delighted at the honour you do me by taking my household for a real household and not for the gigantic picnic I often fear it to be. I am afraid I give it very little of my time. Pomfret does it all. Pomfret is a bookbinder by trade, owner of a house in Cambridge and a grandfather, but he is the unseen spirit of my house. How did it happen? It is a queer story, but an amusing one, as such stories often are. For years we were good friends in Cambridge; he bound my pamphlets and writings for me, and I introduced him to thousands of students, whose various books and papers he looked after. I was able to send him lots of customers and in many ways he acted as a sort of factotum to me. Gradually he became quite comfortably off, built a house in Station Road and saw his children satisfactorily married, but our friendship persisted. He is by nature a bookworm and reads as a matter of principle everything he binds. Thus he has

acquired a mass of highly original knowledge and wisdom. His memory is amazing. With his books he is like a shepherd among his flock. Eventually he knew his way about my library better than I did myself. When Aunt Prudentia left me her house and I decided to come to live in Geneva, I entrusted him with the packing of my books and was surprised to hear that he had handed over his house to his son and was settling his affairs in the town. I asked him whether he was going to spend his old age in Australia, for he has a married daughter there and had been planning to visit her. "You and I, sir, are going abroad among these foreigners," he answered, politely but firmly. All foreign countries that are not part of the British Empire are simply "foreign parts" to the true Englishman. "Are you coming too, Pomfret?" I asked in surprise, and he nodded calmly. "Yes, sir." I told him I had neither the wish nor the means to keep a house-steward, and had no post to offer him that would do justice to his manhood or his business ability, but he explained that he did not want a salary. He simply wanted to come with me, he said; I needed someone to keep my books in order, and he could take a lot of work in the library off my shoulders; he had saved enough to live on, he was interested in Geneva and the new institutions there, the League of Nations, the International Labour Office and the like, and he wanted to see it all for himself. He knew what housemaids and gardeners and such people had to do; he was sure a good cook could be found in Switzerland, and he would like to take the post as my steward or major-domo. So he came with me. He has been here now for six years; every year he takes four weeks' holiday at a time that suits our mutual convenience. So my household is in a double sense a man's household, Beloved. And it may well cut a poor figure in the eyes of a woman. Personally I find that everything runs smoothly, but perhaps I am prejudiced. Pomfret has very precise views about the duties of the domestic staff, and rules them like a father without ever offending anyone. To me he is a bit of Cambridge. He holds

fast to his native customs, looks after the plot of garden I gave him outside the windows of his two rooms in the wing of the house, and busies himself in his workshop, where he always has a book that needs repairing or rebinding. I have managed so far to keep Guy from helping him, for the boy is still forbidden to read, though his eyes are considerably stronger. But Pomfret attracts him. He belongs to a type of Englishman that is extremely successful in colonizing and handling other races, for he possesses the important quality of getting on with people even when he is really an intruder. The fact that Geneva is sometimes foggy and that people sometimes have rheumatism here gives the place a homely feeling and reconciles him to being abroad. He is an exile, but a voluntary one, and that has its charms. He manages to communicate with the French-speaking people around him, as men so placed succeed in doing all over the world, but *how* is a complete mystery to me. A sort of private language has gradually grown up between him and the other occupants of the house, and it works wonderfully. . . .

My darling, up here the spacious night is magnificent. A great star is hanging in unspeakable splendour over Mont Blanc, radiant with power and unfathomable mystery. Stay with me to-night, Monna, beloved! Put your arms around my neck and look at me! O, dark-eyed cloud, wrap me round and let me dream and rest in you! No—not rest! Let me tell you that I am consumed with longing for the look of your eyes, the scent of your breath. I cannot take my arms from around you to-night, I cannot take my lips from yours. The memory of your rich gifts that night under the moon pours through my heart like a torrent. Your eyelids were delicate as the narcissi. The sweetness of those first, young, happy kisses will stay with me till my last breath. We were in Paradise, and the world was just created!

My heart is like an open temple under the night sky, and the breath of God blows through it.

Bless you!

B.

LES AVANTS,

*Friday, July 4, 1930*

The Pindar you wanted, Beloved, you will find in the car when you go home to-night. The Propylaeum Edition is more comprehensive, as well as more intelligible, than Hölderlin's translation, of which, though it has flashes of genius, the diction is too involved. The photograph of me, which was taken in Dresden (I could not leave both you and me entirely to the mercy of Guy's sporting instincts), must have caught me at one of my best moments. I could think of nothing but our meeting at the station at Montreux. Does the picture convey that?

And now what words can I find to express all the fullness of our two days up here, and my one day with you in Geneva? I long to set by the lamp on your writing-table in the turret room the brimming cup of joy and thanksgiving. But I feel, as never before, how impotent words are compared with the overwhelming present.

The rain was sometimes like the cloak a mother casts about some secret life; sometimes like a rousing salute from the gods—such was its wonderful, electrifying freshness. I was grateful for everything. And that everything, Ben, was you. Good night. How often I have said that, and yet it is always new.

Your M.

LE PRÉ AUX MÉLÈZES,

*Friday evening, July 4, 1930*

Your parcel of books beside me in the car was a great comfort on my solitary journey home. I knew that it contained the Pindar, but I hoped there was a letter in it too. I have only just opened it, here in my room, because the certain knowledge of something beautiful to come brightened the hours for me. It is quite late. I have been terribly spoilt by the richness of these days lived close to your strength and joy, my rich one, my sweet one! I feel physically the sudden



deprivation of your company, of the comings and goings, the speech and the silence at your side. And now I am searching your picture for all the things I miss so frightfully. Wonderful knowledge of a thousand little things! The full daylight has streamed in upon the happy dream-life I knew before, and in its light I find my solitary room strangely transformed. My life! My very being! Sometimes I think a man must have lived in the world a generation longer than his beloved if he is to see her peculiar, incomparable qualities, to see her against her background with all that belongs to her and re-echoes in her. It is my almost unspeakable happiness to see the woman I love "all round." Sometimes I feel, when I am naively jealous, that I could taste to the full my happiness, my deep happiness in your rich, blossoming life, only if you turned spontaneously to me, responded to me and to no one else. I want to be more than one person, I want to be fifty different persons among those who know you, so that I can love you and be bound to you in fifty different ways. "Thy elder brother I would be, thy father, anything to thee!" How true that is! But I should like my knowledge of you to transcend kinship, to embrace all degrees of friendship, all phases of acquaintance. You always say I am a ridiculous mixture of asceticism and self-indulgence. To me there is nothing odd in such a mixture. I could be perfectly happy with you if we were engaged together in some hard, long-drawn-out struggle which demanded the utmost frugality, or if we were travelling together along some stony, monotonous, but necessary path. But always together! And yet, if the nearest, closest, sweetest bonds were established, I could still be insatiable. Oh, Monna, Monna! Our talks during these last imperishable days were like the ceaseless commingling of two streams. I could feel it, physically. All the past years came alive in me again; each of us saw the other from youth upward to the present day; we affirmed each other and at the same time had so wonderfully to explain ourselves. That was the grandest thing of all, that each could dip so deep into

his own self. I have never felt so strongly the richness and fascination of our time, the incredible complications of our present situation as Europeans, as blood kinsmen of a common culture. You and your brother were so good as to let me participate in your duality. I deeply enjoyed those morning walks with your brother, while you were looking through the letters and doing your own work. He is, if I may say so, the most German person I know. German in a sense I have always instinctively accepted, namely a man who never seeks his own ends but is liberated from himself, serving an idea or a cause in a simpler and purer form than others. Yet I am aware that this kind of German is growing increasingly rare even in Germany, which makes the existing specimens all the more valuable. I am very fond of your brother. I should like to do something with him sometime, take a journey, embark on some work. I send him greetings. . . . I enclose the financial pages of *The Times* and Keynes's last book, which he has not yet seen.

Now I must pull myself together and attend to my guests. Pat and Bertrand have borne themselves manfully and looked after them for me. I just saw two muffled figures pass the window, and one waved vigorously to me. That must be Semmele. I hear that they are decorating the garage, and that Pomfret has fitted them out with white smocks. They are going to give some kind of performance. Semmele is always giving performances, and I'm glad that the practical and rational Guy will be ruthlessly compelled to take part in it. Now you are sitting on your balcony. Jürgen will be rather tired after his first day up there without you. And you—are you tired? No! You darling, you never-failing comfort! How quickly everything to-day was arranged! Your business with the librarians, your scheme of work. I must wait till Sunday afternoon. Constance is looking forward to coming with me to see you, and I—oh darling! . . . But it is really an excess of happiness for the days to be filled, as they are now, with the sweet excitements of coming and going between here and

Les Avants. Old Adam will have his hands full to spare you day by day to all the people here who are waiting to see you. Constance is quite jealous already—and then there is little Anne and your work, and your brother and your life with him in Les Avants. Poor old Adam! I shall have to take him severely in hand. But not to-day. To-day I must study your picture, which looks back at me with your lovely, candid glance, your faint smile that comes from I know not where. From your eyes? From your cheeks? Immortal secret of a woman who is loved, who is loved like you!

BEN

LES AVANTS,  
*Saturday, July 5,*

BELOVED,

One word of greeting for Sunday morning, and with it a few belated Alpine roses. We have just come back from Eubly, that is to say, we took the funicular up to Souloup. The sky, after the rain, is like an empty, dark-blue bell, without a vestige of haze. But I did not enjoy the ascent, boxed up in the funicular. It seemed to me uncanny—almost profanation. I had a feeling that one ought not to lose touch with the earth, when one aspires to mount to the roof of the world. It is disloyal, and it angers Pan. On such a day, when the gold and blue ocean of air hangs almost motionless above the meadows, Pan seems amazingly near. As a human being with human impulses, shrinking from destiny and yet fearing to fulfil it, one has never an easy conscience in the presence of Pan. How intimidatingly sure and unequivocal nature seems on a day like this, which is filled with light to the uttermost corner. But I am writing nonsense. Jürgen sends his love. He does not talk much, but he is getting on well. We are looking forward to to-morrow. My arms are clasped around your neck, big brother Ben.

Yours.

LE PRÉ AUX MÉLÈZES,

*Sunday evening, July 6, 1930*

When we got back Constance stayed with me for a while. She has only just gone. She enjoyed the fine freedom she felt in your brother's company, and she said a few quite shrewd things about you, darling. Her warmth and unconstrained friendliness have done me good. As we were driving up to Les Avants, with the roses she had picked in such generous abundance as a tardy acknowledgment of the liberation of the Rhineland, we both felt a strong, personal sense of relief that it had happened at last. But I had a feeling that our relief was hypocritical, that we were in part to blame, since our country, too, was responsible for it, unwillingly of course, but that did not make it any the better. Well, it is over, thank God, like a bad dream! What remains is bad enough. Constance, who is as straight as a die, was sure that everything would improve now; she had no doubts, as I had, but she infected me with her bright confidence. But the finest thing about it was the exemplary behaviour of you two. I could not say anything to you—I kissed your hand as we left and felt the sweet responsive pressure of your fingers on mine, that was all I had to take away with me. And now I am trying to comfort myself with this letter.

What a good thing it is, darling, that I can see your windows across Constance's garden from my room in the tower. You will find this letter in your room in the morning. This dovecot of ours and Constance's caravanserai will get on my nerves, but I must of course manage to ignore that. You will be down here with us for two whole days! You see, I said "us"—that is the result of a serious talk with old Adam. . . . I had a job to do to-day which called for a spice of humour—I had a long argument with Pat on the subject of passion. He is such a rebellious lover that he sees the woman he loves exclusively from his own angle, and suffers agonies when she places as a barrier in his path the reality of her own nature and her own demands on life. He does not understand that

she does so quite naturally and unconsciously. He grows angry and makes accusations; he is wholly made up of demands. Our talk was a long one. My love, I bid you a tender, tender good night!

Your B.

LES AVANTS,

Tuesday, July 8, 1930

BELOVED,

It is late. After supper, the two girls, who were staying the night, thought they would like to dance, and, to my joy, Jürgen caught the infection. I realize that it is far better for a convalescent to be taken in tow by perfectly light-hearted, thoughtless young people, than to be in the care of some sensible person, who *nolens volens* is in league with the doctor. As their host and the only man available, he was obliged, out of common politeness, to put himself at their disposal, but he found it tremendous fun too. And as the little Nielsen, with her splendid intellectual energy, was just as anxious to pump the financial expert as to dance with him, perfect balance was established. The two young Kesslers were there as well. Their parents are Germans of a type which you say is becoming rare (I do not know if you are right). When a good, solid home education is followed by a schooling of intellectual activity in international circles, surely it leads to very good results. I am glad that the Kesslers are being recalled from the League of Nations in the autumn and are returning to the Foreign Office in Berlin. Anne Maria will study the violin at the Hochschule. She will be an acquisition for our musical evenings, at which Volker, with his really great gifts, has hitherto reigned supreme. Hans Karl, who has not quite lost his German cocksureness, quarrelled fiercely with Maisie, whose calm, accurate, juristic intelligence was, much to my amusement, more than a match for the exaggerated and romantic impetuosity which characterizes his

particular vintage year. It was great fun. By the way, they want to join our expedition to the Cime Haute. We shall be quite a caravan.

But this is not what I really meant to write about; it was something quite different. Isn't the time going terribly fast, dearest, dearest? To-day actually a whole week of our month has gone and I seem to have seen so little of you these last two days. Really we had only Monday evening, and our two short morning visits to the adorable Bess in the paddock. When shall we go for a ride, Ben? I think I could get down by Thursday evening, and then we could have a long ride at sunrise the next morning, and nobody need be a penny the wiser.

I cannot tell you, Ben, what an absolute godsend it was, that dance I had with you on Monday evening. Caught up in the vortex of conversation and the swarms of people that cluster around Constance, one feels as if one were torn to pieces and parcelled out. That dreamlike wandering, as you called it, was the only means by which we could shut ourselves off from the rest of the world and exist for each other. A dance is the ultimate test of the magic of that "conjunction of the stars." It is quite a different unison from that of speech. It was unutterable joy to make proof of this. I would not dance this evening—I wanted to keep untouched the sense I have of you, my only love.

I have no idea whether you will be able to come up to-morrow or the day after. Oh, Ben, do come. I shall be working with Anne Nielsen to-morrow morning. She is all fire and flame, a positive gift for me—and vice versa. She, too, has to master all the material which I have been collecting here. She is anxious to obtain a firmer grasp of the subjects I am studying myself, and of everything else that can throw light on the vast problem of the paradox of world capitalism. War and post-War generation, we present a united front. But in the afternoon the girls are going down to Geneva and will take this letter with them. "Just for show"—but not only for

that—I am sending a book with it, which I happened to find up here: Flaubert's *Education Sentimentale*. Madame Arnoux, who "in an environment of flagging pleasure, achieves a life of exuberant self-denial"—to quote a lecture, which drew my attention again to the old book—is an immortal character. Although, God knows, she was no saint, she really has about her something of that smile of St. Anna's. Oh, Ben, this is all idle talk. All I want is to be with you, in your armchair—or better still, by the little wall near the lake. For everyone else is in bed long ago. We should hear the soft lapping of the waves, and perhaps there would be swans, curled up in round white balls, rocking on the ripples. And all at once a seagull, seized with sudden mysterious panic, would swoop down into the midst of them, uttering its strange startled cry, and then they would all flap their wings as if to shake off the intruder.

Then all would be still again, and I should feel your arm round my shoulders and the touch of your lips upon my eyes, there by that boundless lake beneath the illimitable sky.

MONNA

Ring up at once and tell me when you can come.

*Telephone Conversation*

LE PRÉ AUX MÉLÈZES—GRAND HÔTEL DES AVANTS,  
Wednesday, July 9, 1930

BEN: Monna, I should like to come at once. But if I come, you must let me ask you something.

MONNA: Come you must, Ben. But ask? . . . Ask now? . . .

BEN: Yes. The question of questions.

MONNA: Ben. . . . In your Sunday letter you spoke of personal demands on life, acting as a barrier. You were referring to someone, who is still only on the threshold of

life, and who has no duties except to herself. If it were so with me—there would be no need of questions, Ben. But may it not apply—oh, Ben, this damned telephone—may it not apply to someone, who is midway in life, and no longer alone, someone, who must share the burdens of others? . . . And not only that . . . surely one's place is there . . . when the darkest hour of all is at hand? . . . Must you ask, Ben?

BEN: Monna. . . .

MONNA: Ben, you are a tree planted by the water brooks. I have always told you so. There were never "only demands" in you. All this is in your Sunday letter. I read it over and over again. . . . But you will come, Beloved? Promise.

BEN: I will come, Monna.

LE PRÉ AUX MÉLÈZES,  
*Thursday evening, July 10, 1930*

LOVE,

I have managed to restrain myself from writing till to-day, but there must be a letter in your room when you reach Constance's in an hour's time. Then I shall see the gleam of light in your windows and know that my letter is telling you what I cannot tell you in person.

I could not refuse the girls when they asked if they might fetch you. The small car is too light to steer with safety on those steep roads. I don't like other people to drive you—a sign of progressive disintegration, don't you think? But no, I am not going to disintegrate, I am going to take myself sternly in hand, as you wish me to! When you come up to me on tiptoe, as I love, and ask me for something, there is nothing in the world I could refuse you. Your head just comes up to my shoulder, I have noticed that particularly, but when you stand on tiptoe, your arms come round my neck and we kiss, and after that my whole day is in tumult! . . .



Since I came back from seeing you last night I have been busily playing the host. Semmele and Guy spend all their time in the garage. Happily we have two garages, or there would be collisions with the chauffeur. They are painting the walls with branches and exotic animals; that is to say, Semmele is painting while Guy mixes the colours in the stable-buckets. They are working like niggers. The gramophone is on the floor and Semmele at the top of a ladder. She has to have music to give her inspiration. When the record is finished, she scrambles quickly down, winds up the gramophone, scrambles up again and goes on ecstatically painting. Everything is all right.

We were out sailing all the morning. Tom and Dick Spender pass their whole time on the water. I don't grudge them their holiday in this heavenly place, and it really is heavenly. But I am hungering for the snow. If only I could go up there with you! And I am tired of all these people. Is that against our "agreement"? . . . Now for a bit of good news: Duncan MacAlister is coming to stay with us as Guy's tutor. He can easily spare time for it from his work at the university, and he and the boy get on splendidly together. So my mind is at ease about Guy's education next winter. Oh, my darling! Shall I see you again this evening in your white dress on the balcony with all those happy young people? You radiant one!

Your B.

CHÂLET DES CYGNES,

*Thursday night, July 10, 1930*

This room, my one and only love, is quite impossible. What was Constance thinking of to give me a room from which I can see the light shining in your turret? That very turret where, when I was in Dresden, I used to spend whole nights with you, Ben. How utterly I was with you, I shall never tell you. And now I am expected to sit here, with that light filtering through the rose bushes, and your letter before

me, in which you obey my behest—see, my tears are falling on my paper. Never in my life has such a sentimental document ended anywhere, except in the fire or the wastepaper basket. But this you must know, Beloved. It is much worse for me than it is for you.

I simply cannot bear to see that light, in which the shadow of the roses are mingled. Perhaps you will stay in your turret only while you can see the light in my own room. I will not torment you!—oh, Ben, as if I would torment you!—I know every expression, Ben, which passed over your beloved features this evening. It all comes back to me. . . .

Now I have waited here in the dark a whole hour for the light in your turret to go out. You know we are riding at sunrise to-morrow. Do go to sleep, Ben, and God keep you, Beloved, Beloved. But the light is still burning, still burning. I can see nothing except the light. I do not know what you are doing. All I know is that you are still awake. Night after night, for weeks on end, I came to your turret to bid you good night. I felt as if I were with you in more substantial form than that outward shell of mine which remained on the balcony above the acacias. All my real self was with you. And now I am to sit here and look across at that light, after the aloofness of an evening with a dozen people around us. Oh, it is impossible! May I come for that good-night kiss, without which no day was ever allowed to end? May I come, in spite of the demand I have made upon you? I feel that I cannot do otherwise. I dreamt once that the door on to the terrace stood open. Perhaps it is open still. . . .

LE PRÉ AUX

*Thursday night, July 10, 1930*

MONNA,

Lingering voices rise from the garden; they are bidding each other good night, some coming here, some going over

to Constance's. No one wanted me, praise God, so I slipped away. I shall sit here a little and think. Thinking and writing to you have become one and the same. Hitherto, I have always sent you the results of my thinking, sweet! For there has not really been anything that I could not share with you. So I am pampered and have become self-indulgent. But now perhaps I must really use that old chest, in which I can bury my letters alive until—but I will be sensible! There is you, and every day is a gift of grace! When you are gone—it is time I faced up to it—there will be time to decide what to do with the innumerable letters that cry out to be written but ought not to be. Shall I make a mighty effort and stop writing altogether, except perhaps on Sundays, as a reward for a week of toiling and moiling, as we say, of sober, impersonal activity? Shall I pile up a mountain of work, build up a wall of books, following that old masculine recipe to free one from beautiful, deceptive dreams—"a pipe, a book—and no nonsense!" Yes, the man who wrote that knew what he meant. Books—up here I have masses of them; they are the lonely man's bread, the best conceivable company, when "the one" is not here for whose sake I put up with all the others. There is a light in your room. Now I will try whether the recipe works. I have the pipe and the book—I will try it. . . .

Like Faust I have thumbed the books of all the faculties, and some of it was worth while. But I have just put them all back on their shelves, all except an old German Bible—Aunt Prudentia was a bibliophile and I have often been grateful to her for it—which still lies open on my knee. In the middle of the Psalms a dried ivy-leaf, brittle as glass, picked God knows when. It is a huge tome and heavy, which is as it should be, very strong and fine, with its brownish wood-paper, its orthography—which gives me some trouble but belongs to it like a kind of melody—and its big, unwieldy type. I must let it lie. "*Ein psalm von den rosen, vorzusingen:*

*Gott, hilf mir; denn das wasser gehet mir bis an die seele.<sup>1</sup> . . . Denn du lässt mich erfahren viel und grosse angst; und machest mich wieder lebendig, und holst mich wieder aus der tiefe der erden herauf.<sup>2</sup> . . . Ich dencke der alten zeit, der vorigen jahre. Ich dencke des nachts an mein saytenspiel; und rede mit meinem hertzen; mein geist muss forschen.”<sup>3</sup>* Everywhere between the pages fine, dry leaves and petals, ferns, little brown harebells, quaking grass, rosemary—“that’s for remembrance,” said Ophelia. I want to show it all to you now. Heaven help me if that is to be the effect of all my reading! I want to show you everything, to tell you everything, to share this strange thing life with you! You are still too young to know it for yourself, with all your shrewdness and wisdom. I should like to say that to you like an old grandfather, and watch you as you sit on the arm of my chair, say it to you gently, so that you would have to look into my eyes. I have always taken the phrase “starry eyes” for an effective bit of poet’s licence, but I have been mistaken. It is an accurate description; there are eyes that shine like stars—eyes such as yours! What are they doing now, sweet, while I am here and cannot see them? Are you reading? Your light is still burning, Monna! No, it has just gone out. I am almost relieved, if one can so use the word. Now I shall read for a while in your Pindar, for sleep is out of the question. The lines on the eclipse of the sun, written on April 30, 463. What liberties books take with bygone times! Nothing is stable in them, and yet it has all passed once through the living human heart. As I read, I repeatedly say to you: “Listen, isn’t that fine? . . . Don’t you think that’s beautiful?” Soon I shall be sitting here with my books and you will be back in Berlin, at home with your menfolk. I shall go crazy, Monna. I do not know what will happen to me! It is there, of course, in the Brahms texts. That man knew so much:

<sup>1</sup> Psalm 69.

<sup>2</sup> Psalm 71.

<sup>3</sup> Psalm 77.

*"Wo ist das alles, alles hin—Leid, Lieb' und Glück und Jugendsinn—*

*"Der Wind fährt seufzend durch die Nacht—mein Herz ist schwer, mein Auge wacht."<sup>1</sup>*

LE PRÉ AUX MÉLÈZES,

*Morning, Friday, July 11, 1930*

MY SWEET LOVE,

What a morning it was! And what a night! It is all I can do to control myself and master the impulse to catch Bess by the reins as she makes off with you. You managed her splendidly and got her under control every time, but that anxiety is still in my bones, added to all the rest! I really do not know what I am doing, Monna! Bright sunshine is now pouring into my room, and the lonely hours of the night are like an evil dream, from which I started up at the sound of that step on the stairs! I hardly had time to think that someone must still be awake in the house. It was three o'clock! For a second a flash of irrational hope stabbed through me—then the door was open! You in your dark cloak over the white dress! In the inmost shrine of my heart I have always seen you like that, always dreamed of you, always expected you, every night. It was the fulfilment of my secret wishes, the dream of all my dreams! And yet I knew you had come to comfort me, because I could find no surcease for my pain! Oh, my sweet, I knew it, and yet the moment I kissed your eyes and your hands my wishes were drowned in you. Only a woman who is loved above all else in the world can triumph thus, only a man who celebrates "the sabbath of the heart," can bend thus beneath the yoke. For if his love is like you he can lay all at her feet. Then we talked so quietly lest we should say what each knew was in his heart, and your kindness

<sup>1</sup> "Where is it all, all gone—sorrow, love, and happiness and youthful spirits?

The wind goes sighing through the night; my heart is heavy, my eyes wakeful."

thrilled me as you bent over my chair, put your hands across my forehead and kissed me with wonderful, gentle ardour on the lips. "Then I died"—as the little, unknown Brahms *lied* says, and truly the saint who wakes in heaven must feel as I did. Indeed in the deepest parts of my mind I am always a little in heaven, and the time will often come when that must be my refuge, for the common round will return and my heart be timid and sad. You knew how to soothe my yearnings, dearest one. . . . We sat close together in the big chair; we talked and sometimes we were silent. You were buried deep in my arms—*blotti*, as the French say of this sweet and secret communion. I could see you clearly and I drank in the sight of you, storing you up for the future. You were different, your eyes darker, your voice tense and sweetly tremulous—now I know why, since I read the letter you left to comfort me. But how incredibly lucky that the terrace-door was unlocked. The others were all outside when I came up; they promised that whoever came last would lock the door. So I suppose no one was last, or they all forgot it, God bless them!

And then the morning. Sunrise in the mountains, where I have so often seen it, watching with yearning and impatience. How happy, how light-hearted it all was! What fun making the two cups of coffee on my spirit stove! All that I do with you is like a festival. And then our meeting in the paddock, the saddling of the horses! But it was incredibly careless of me not to have tried the little mare the day before to see how her temper was. During this warm weather they are out at grass night and day, and she is still rather restive. It was a test of horsemanship, darling! My heart stopped beating, but it was a grand sight to see her galloping off as though she would never stop. You handled her magnificently. I was proud of you. That after all the rest!

Now I must see that this letter goes to you with the parcel of books. The girls want to drive you back this evening, but I may come up to-morrow afternoon. Now you are working

in the library and I will look out one of my ant-books for you, since you are so good as to be interested in the subject. I would rather bring the shortest, the one on the wasp, the "lone vagabond," as it should be called in view of its incredibly odd but ingenious ways. Thank God for all the mysteries of the world!

I kiss you again and again.

B.

LES AVANTS,

*Afternoon, Saturday, July 12, 1930*

Beloved, your letter! What can I say? Everything is in it—God-given radiance, and shadow, which is God-given too, I take it. I think that I know the meaning of both, just as you do, Ben. Did we not attain to that knowledge by the self-same path? The gold and the dark draw ever closer together in the circle that surrounds us. Jürgen, who walked most of the way to Château d'Oex, over Cape au Moine, with me to-day, quoted to me from his beloved Virgil—he is always reading and re-reading the *Aeneid*—those strange, untranslatable words: "*Sunt lacrimae rerum.*" This is how he interprets them:

"Things have tears of their own. It is not we who weep over them; they have tears of their own; the tears are part of them; and only through tears can we understand them."

It has haunted me ever since: *Sunt lacrimae rerum*. But sometimes, I cannot help feeling—elder brother, father—that I must seem to you childish and immature. When I think that you are coming to-morrow afternoon, and that Monday and Tuesday we shall be climbing the Dent du Midi together, all shadows simply vanish—I cannot help it. Nothing is real except my boundless happiness; nothing can cloud it. Everything is well: you are coming to-morrow. The day after we shall drive to Champéry, and the night we shall spend in the hut at Bonaveau. The youngsters will think it is because we are afraid of them beating us, that we have set out alone.

Who cares? I promise not to alarm you up there in the snows, as I did when we were out riding.

Poor little nervous Bess—I must certainly try to reconcile her. It was really not her fault but mine. My mood was not sufficiently placid and light-hearted, and being still a little upset, she naturally felt this.

God bless your Sunday morning, Ben. In spite of my tears of Friday night, I am looking forward with utterly illogical and blissful confidence to the “nonsense” of our next few days together.

“All men’s Babylons strive but to impart  
The grandeurs of their Babylonian heart.”

So it is. At least with

Your MONICA

LES AVANTS,  
*Thursday, July 17, .*

MY BELOVED,

The two Kesslers, together with Tom and Maisie, who drove them up, have just been here—all of them brown as Red Indians. They wished to inform us that, thanks to the unbroken weather, the young party found our joking message the next day on the Cime haute. At first they actually thought it was an appeal for help from persons in difficulties, and it created quite a flutter. Jürgen was a little disappointed. He had thought that he would be able to do the climb, and he still believes that he would have been equal to it. Perhaps he is right. It was not a difficult one. Yet it took us six hours from Bonaveau, and we climbed to a height of over nine thousand feet. I shall not be coming down to Geneva again this week. I want to make a longish expedition with Jürgen before Volker arrives; Volker, of course, cannot do much climbing because of his wound. But this is my chief reason. I do not want the echo of those days to be lost in that new



whirl of gaiety, within and without, which is in full swing down there now.

What shall I say to you about those days? They were like destiny itself—the essence of destiny. Everything was contained in them—everything that is in any way beautiful and important, and one lives it all with tenfold intensity. The sense that life can be so divinely strong abides with me, as the fragrance of snow and sun still clings to my hair. Isn't it lovely that these mountain tours always begin with the evening—the long golden evening of anticipation in the hut, when the white peaks of the mountains smile at one alluringly before they withdraw once more into the unapproachable? It is like creation, when out of morning and evening the first day was born. When we sat on the wooden bench outside the hut, Ben, you with your pipe, and both of us just mildly, deliciously tired—we had done very little climbing as yet—while the gold faded from the meadows and the sky grew pale, it was one of those human moments which are forever recurring in the dance of the hours from eternity to eternity—the None among the Vigils—essential evening. You know, it was as if we had been wandering together for thousands of years, and this were the evening of our first millennium, which is but a day in God's sight—an august evening, full of the promise of the second day.

And then the glad dawn, when the guide knocks at the door, and you step out on to the dewy grass, as if it were the first morning of creation. All the primeval words echo around us. "Let there be light. And there was light." "The sun resounds as of old." "The deadly still clamour of light." Up in the mountains, the fundamental powers of creation tingle, I think, in every vein. We have our part in them; we, too, have our realm where we may say: *Fiat lux—et facta est lux.*

When we were resting under the last of the fir-trees on the Susanfe Alp, before the region of rocks and snow begins, I could feel your heart beating against my shoulder. At first

I was almost startled and felt as if I were eavesdropping. But then it was as if the same blood-stream were pulsing through both of us—"one heart" they say—and with it that mighty light and that creative force were rushing through our veins. I felt you so intensely within me—I knew you as I knew myself. I could see every wave in your tide of life coming and going, ebbing and flowing.

There was surely no need for the guide to rope us on the glacier of the Col des Paresseux. But all the same, it was lovely when he put the rope round us—we smiled at each other: we two were roped together on the roof of the world, so that we might hold to each other "for better, for worse."

I am always overwhelmed by that Panic feeling of desert places, when the ice yields its scent and the air above the rocks quivers in the deathlike stillness. When you set foot in that region, you might be the first man or the last. And that which one bears within one, becomes as overpoweringly great as a day of creation. The intoxication of the mountains! The heart goes wild. I knew just what was happening, Beloved, when we sat by the glacier stream and you gripped your ice-axe so hard that the veins stood out on your hands, while you kept pushing, with more and more violence, bigger and bigger stones into the stream. We nearly slipped in ourselves, and the guide looked at you deferentially, but disapprovingly. And when I attempted to take the axe away from you, you gripped my hand till my ring cut into my finger. I will tell you now, Beloved, what I felt when I slipped the ring into your coat pocket and said laughingly: "Keep this for me." The other day, as I went past the garage, Semmele was sitting on her ladder, singing in her clear voice:

"And now, since part we must,  
Give me thy golden ring."

Not for remembrance, Ben, but for a pledge. In the melody, in the whole symbolism, there is something of that sweet,

utter trustfulness which the folk-song expresses: trust in oneself, trust in the beloved, trust in fate.

"I am thine, thou art mine,  
Thou shalt ne'er thy true love tine."

You forgot to return my ring, you know. It was given to my grandmother by the way, by a celebrated German musician—I will not reveal his name—when, as a very young girl, she was a member of his choir. There is a posy inside it:

*"Honi soit qui mal y pense. . . ."*

It was strange to look down from the Cime haute, in the middle of the rock and ice ridge, and to see the lake lying so peacefully below there, with its eternal garland of human destinies, flowering and fading, great and small. And how lovely it was at last to emerge from that granite world—ah, you must read that beautiful essay of Goethe's on natural science, where he speaks of "the oldest, firmest, deepest, most imperturbable son of nature," the very opposite of the human heart, "which is the most manifold, the most unstable, fickle, and impressionable part of creation . . . whose swift impulses, both in myself and others, have often given me pain" (that is more or less what he says)—how lovely it was to emerge at last from that granite world into the realm of the "impressionable heart," on that evening drive from Salvan, when we sat, thoroughly tired this time, with my hand in yours.

Yes, early this morning I was abruptly reminded of the instability and untrustworthiness of all things, which are ordered by mankind, especially nowadays, by disquieting news from Germany. To-morrow the Government are bringing a very drastic emergency measure before the Reichstag, and it is most unlikely that they will have a majority. That will mean a dissolution. But how will the Government come through a general election? The deliverance of the Rhineland is, unfortunately, from the point of view of popular sentiment, no sufficient foundation for future confidence. Volker will

bring us all the news on Monday. We think he will come, even if things become critical. His Ministry of Inland Navigation (until two years ago he held high administrative office as *Landrat* in his home in Friesland) will be little affected by these events, though he himself will feel them all the more passionately.

Jürgen has been amusing himself during the last two days with translating some beautiful passages from his beloved *Aeneid*. He laid some of his translations on my writing-table; among them, and I know why, was Aeneas's speech, which contains these lines:

"Me se fata meis paterentur ducere vitam  
*Auspiciis*, et sponte mea componere curas  
 Urbem Troianam primum, dulcesque meorum  
 Reliquias colerem. . . ."

"Would but the fates bestow on me the power  
 To lead the life that I would choose to live,  
 Following the urgent impulse of my heart,  
 First would I rear again my own dear Troy,  
 The inheritance of those I loved and lost."

It is certainly rather a free translation. But I think that Aeneas himself would acknowledge the intense passion of Jürgen's paraphrase of *mea sponte*. And yet. . . . Oh, Ben, it is good to know that I can appeal to the "father" in you.

Your M.

LE PRÉ AUX MÉLÈZES,

*Afternoon, Saturday, July 19, 1930*

MY DARLING,

The children were disappointed to hear that you and Jürgen cannot come to their play to-morrow afternoon. (I have been worried by the thought of how the news from Germany would affect your brother!) So to make up for it I have promised that they shall bring you the flowers. They will not disturb you, but they were so looking forward

to seeing you, and as Anne wanted to see you again this afternoon, I allowed them to accompany her. All this time down here I have been like a troubled spirit, *une âme en peine*! How can one be so far away and yet visible to others and apparently able to carry on the daily round? What a descent from those sun-transfigured heights I trod with you! But since then I have taken an iron grip on myself, and though the days have been alive with beauty I have not written to you—I could not bear to; all I could do was subdue myself in silence. Yet each hour seems precious beyond measure; they drop as the rose-petals around my seat under the lime-tree, drop with an almost inaudible sound. I hear it, reading or thinking, for there, thank heaven, I am completely alone. They lie under the flowering bushes, little, frail, scented, empty shells! . . . But these I am sending you have just opened and know only light and perfume. Life is beautiful. . . . I kiss you!

B.

LE PRÉ AUX MÉLÈZES

*Sunday evening, July 20, 1930*

BELOVED,

I am so grateful to you for asking me on the telephone to write to you this very day. And I am so glad that all is well with you both, despite the strain of waiting for the more detailed news which will reach you to-morrow. So your friend is coming straight up to you by rail. You know the car is at his disposal any time he cares to telephone. Darling, I have been writing to you ever since my letter of yesterday afternoon, but again and again I could find no better destination for what I had written than the waste-paper basket. But you told me to write, so I must extract from it all the less irrational parts and send them to you. I seem to have half a lifetime to report to you since I kissed your hand in farewell, five endless days ago. "*Wie geht mit bleibehangnen Füßen die Zeit bedächtig Schritt vor Schritt*"<sup>1</sup>—yet, when

<sup>1</sup> "How leaden-footed time goes step by step."

I am with you, two days melt into one and make one hour of warm, sweet life. Moreover I never feel fatigue. Happiness, I think, can destroy the fatigue-poisons in the blood as effectively as sleep. When you are down here among us the day may last from sunrise till the stars come out, but I am as fully rested as after a long night's sleep. To-day passed more quickly on account of the children; indeed it was their day. They gave the performance we have been waiting for. All the youngsters round about were here in force, and so, for that matter, were their seniors. The garage, beautifully painted, was as hot as an oven, but luckily it was too small to accommodate the audience. We collected all available chairs from here and from Constance's, and *The Singing Wood* by Semmele was performed on the big lawn. The "singing" was provided by a long-suffering gramophone, hidden under a camel-hair rug beneath the lime-tree. A touch of the foot releases the brake and turns on the music. Semmele, who also acted as producer, dashed across every now and then to set the thing going with a well-aimed kick. It was very effective. Meanwhile, elves, gnomes and other sylvan creatures moved to and fro. The play was in pantomime, necessarily, for the performers all spoke different languages, but a trifle like that is not enough to impede Semmele in her creative urge. She had invented and designed everything herself and even made the costumes. For days we saw one victim after another writhing with laughter while she moulded the costumes on their living bodies. Semmele insists on getting things right. With her sharp little fingers she felt the build of each performer to get the hang of the draperies right, and the results were quite astonishing. She had also dyed with her own hands the precious materials—all incredibly cheap. It is a dangerous business when Semmele goes in for dyeing, and all the valuables in the house have to be put under lock and key. All kinds of things, apart from textiles, are plunged by her into the seductive dye when once she has made it. In the lumber-room we have a few odd-coloured walking

sticks, a grass-green clothes-brush and a raincoat of brownish mauve, which happily has no owner, the relics of past experiments. I have just paid a last visit to Guy as he lay asleep, and I noticed the poisonous pink of his pyjamas, which certainly were of another colour when they were bought. Semmele, too, was fast asleep, with an open book at her side. It was Schiller's philosophic works, and a half-eaten apple lay exactly on the title of an essay on Grace and Dignity. She spends a lot of time with me in the library. I believe she has a feeling that Uncle Ben needs looking after. Years ago she told me she would marry me when she grew up, and the engagement still tacitly holds between us. But I think her little twelve-year-old heart, full of all that is fine and stirring and mysteriously beautiful, is wise beyond her years. When she reads the classics—and she reads nothing meaner—one can see her swallowing tears of joy over passages of full-throated rhetoric, and her little face, like a baroque angel, grows very grave. She really belongs on a Bernini altar, seated with her sturdy little legs astride a cloud, blowing with all her might into a fine gold trumpet, while she beams, apple-cheeked, at the greatness and wonder of life and the goodness and omnipotence of the Creator.

Oh darling, even amidst all this childish play I have missed you indescribably, and everything has been just an effort to forget. . . .

Pat and Bertrand are here with me downstairs in the yellow room. Their holidays are coming to an end and they are making plans. Pat must have a serious talk with his chief about his work. He has not heard from Nell since she left for the Engadine. Tom and Bertrand are better off, for they know what they want and are following the straight, professional road that leads to it. But things are hard in England to-day for a definitely political mind like Pat's. Nowhere a great idea or a real leader to point the way, only highly respectable but unproductive mediocrities. Dozens of gifted young fellows like Pat are wearing themselves out in a kind

of mute, irritable impatience. And precious time is being lost. It is enough to make one's head go round when one realizes how much energy is wasted through apathy and the absence of any sense of direction and the strange and terrible inertia that lies over everything. What are we all waiting for? . . . I am anxiously looking forward to the further details you will get from Berlin to-morrow. I take it our plan still holds and I am expecting you both here to lunch on Wednesday before I drive you to Chamonix. If we spend the night there, we can drive round the lake without hurrying and then go on to Les Avants without its being too much for Jürgen.

I heard from my son this morning. He is going to marry one of the women doctors of the Zenana Mission. They have been working together for some time at the station in Rawal Pindi, he as bacteriologist and zoologist. He writes so happily that it warms one's heart. Nothing could be better for him than to have his own home out there. They want to be married very soon and to make an extremely interesting trip to Assam, a trip he ought to make for the sake of his work. But he has no one to look after his laboratories while he is away. His assistants are all natives and expert supervision is indispensable. Bertrand is to go out as his assistant, but he has had no experience of Indian conditions and could not yet take sole responsibility.

Now let the long, long day come to an end. On Wednesday, my darling, I shall see you. This will come up with the peaches, which are now at their best. I wonder if you will write me again before you come.

B.

LE PRÉ AUX MÉLÈZES,

*Early morning, Monday, July 21, 1930*

MONNA,

There is a marvellous twilight over the mountains and I have been awake since the first bird called. What does the



hour matter to me, when I can feel in my heart the flush of a dawn which no one can feel who has not been through what I have been through? That is a wonderful phrase which speaks of the "dawn" of love. "*Du beschämst mich wie Morgenröte*"<sup>1</sup>—your Goethe saw that with his own eyes, saw the flush on the rocky cliff, on the chill mountain peak, which on such a night as this rear up their stony majesty, pitiless and immobile, terrifying the human heart. Then, with the first bird's call, there came into that dead world the thought of you, like the flush of dawn, free from all taint of gloom and fear.

It was late last night before I had the chance to be alone. Now at the end of their holidays my guests have many things to discuss together, and that is good, for it shows that their weeks of relaxation have given them what they needed. I sat with my books in the room in the tower. The children had so filled the place with flowers, that we, the books and I, had to rearrange ourselves. In these bloomy days of high summer I let the children pick as many flowers as they like, for if a garden cannot stand that when at its zenith, then the gardener has failed. There is a time when children should be allowed to pick flowers; later they take as much or more pleasure in them by leaving them where they are, where they grow and bloom. They realize there is no more need to pick a flower than a star and rejoice in their splendour. If one can learn that, why not the ultimate wisdom of enjoyment—the wisdom which allows a beloved person to bloom where he or she is rooted, which is satisfied with the unutterable pleasure of his or her existence? Why should one want the loved one, want him completely, insatiably? Or does life teach us that lesson too—at the end?

So now I am in the good company of flowers and books; with the books in the past, with the flowers in the present. And with my thoughts, Monna? In the future? No, the future is still too much like the mountain-mass which remained

<sup>1</sup> "You shame me like the blush of dawn."

even to him, the great German seer, "nobly mute." The redness of dawn makes halt before the future. I must be thankful that it warms and lightens the cliffs and peaks of the present.

Last night, when I came to myself—and therefore to you—I thought I should like to visit you as I had just visited the child, to see you asleep, lying quite safe in your sleep, blooming and thriving like the plants in the garden. And I smiled, remembering your smile. That is how I should have seen you yesterday, my darling, and I should have made sure that you were properly tucked up, so that the night air could safely stream in through the window. How happily I should have closed the door behind me, with the pure happiness fatherhood can give. What fools men are to give themselves so rarely that strong, invigorating feeling! Fatherhood—it is our own fault that there is so little known, so little written about it. When a man realizes what fatherhood means he is at the beginning of true manhood. Even the young man, if he is truly manly, can always take refuge in this inward realm, provided he gives himself time to look into his own heart. It can mean his salvation, neither more nor less, if he allows it to grow within him—I have realized that late but with overwhelming force. Am I ever to know, Monna, the full meaning of the philosophy I am explaining to you now by the light of my own experience?

Your friend is coming to-day from Berlin. He is—how old? Getting on for forty, I should say. My boy Rupert is now over thirty. The young people with me now, starting with the eldest: Pat, twenty-five, thinks himself old and tired of life, but actually he is only in love and has not found the right job. That is a bad state to be in; a man must find his own work—that is the beginning of all things. But the finding of his own love, that is grace, there is no other word for it. And one goes through life so ignorant until one has thoroughly grasped that fact. Bertrand, at twenty-three, is already a fatherly young man. You need only see him with children

and you know you need have no anxiety about him. But I never had any. Those fine girls at Constance's have sensible fathers, you can see by the look of them. What a help a real father can be to a woman nowadays! Yes, fatherhood is well worth while, and a father has his hands pretty full. Women are just beginning to show what they can do, and heaven knows they have already given proof of their capacity. But all our resources of dullness and obtusity are mobilized against them in their effort to help us get this wonderful world we have made with such wisdom out of the deepest ruts. When I hear a young man making fun of women's work to-day I should like to shake my fist in his face. One has a fuller right to do it as a father than merely as an adoptive or step-father or father-confessor! I wish I had a few daughters!

For some time I have been wondering how I could manage to see you again to-day. I have not been able to think of an excuse. To-day you belong, whole and undivided, to your own people and to their thoughts and cares. They are mine also, my darling, as you know, though I am no more than a distant relative. I cannot tell you how my mind is occupied with all that concerns and troubles you. I can feel it physically; I know where your thoughts are, I know to whom your heart and mind belong in these anxious days. The city of Troy!

The sun is rising in all its radiance. How warm it is here on my hands at the window! How good it is! Sweetest, is it fine where you are? I think pipes were invented for a man to hold between his teeth and bite hard when he feels he needs to. They are sometimes necessary. I recognize the wisdom of whoever invented this form of distraction—a pipe, a book—and no nonsense. . . .

Two half-grown boys in blue sports clothes are riding up through the paddock. They are Maisie and Anne; they asked if they could exercise the horses for me this morning. Perhaps Constance will have a bright idea and think of something useful or pleasant, so that I shall be able to drive up with

the children and deliver it. Women have an instinct in such matters. I shall keep close to her this morning; we men are so stupid that we fail just when our need is greatest. But I know how to find help, the only help that can make to-day bearable. I find it thus: I think of the night you came to me, I see your look, my dark-eyed love, your smile, and with a sigh that runs through every drop of blood in my veins, I press my lips to yours.

BEN

HÔTEL DES AVANTS,

*Night, Sunday, July 20, 1930*

I am so sad, Ben, that we cannot come down to Geneva. I made the children tell me all that had been planned, but Semmele was already spying out the land to see if, by way of compensation, a special performance could not be arranged for us up here. She did not really think it was worth the trouble to put us off with fair words. I think she was actually considering the possibilities of the concert hall belonging to the hotel. She certainly insisted on inspecting it. But then she thought that the park, or better still, the meadow just behind the wood would be pleasanter. When she discovered, on the edge of the park, a semi-circular plot of grass surrounded by fir-trees, her plan was complete. We were to act the *Iphigenia*, preferably by moonlight. I was to play the title rôle, while she herself, after she had bestowed a glance on Jürgen's manly form and decided that he was "too old," was to play Orestes. You could be Thoas, and perhaps Anne Nielsen, for whom she has a slight passion, Pylades, but Pylades need not say all that Goethe has put into his mouth. And then perhaps Jürgen would be kind enough to play Arkas—although it was not a very attractive part. The question of an audience—there is no one here besides us who knows German—did not worry her in the least. All that mattered was the play. Guy listened with wonder and awe

to all her dashing suggestions. She forged ahead with the speed of the wind. The steady, conscientious boy kept reminding her rather anxiously that they ought to be going down to see about their own preparations. She has learnt a good deal of English; she makes preposterous mistakes, but is very fluent. Guy can always understand her perfectly. When we were strolling in the park, arm in arm, like women and friends, behind our men, I could not help asking her, quite privately, how Uncle Ben was. She snuggled up closer to me, and looking me in the face with her clear, hazel eyes, said that in her opinion you were not as merry as usual. But to-morrow she was going to do something jolly, which would give you pleasure. She was quite sure that it would.

Your roses are too beautiful, Beloved. I am sitting on the balcony, and the moon will soon be full again. I keep thinking of those days in May, at the Carlton—of lilac and laburnum and iris germanica standing in front of the open window, against the blue background of the night.

“Then life began, when first I loved you.  
Say, then my care began.”

Sometimes a whole shower of rose leaves falls on to my paper. Empty bowls? No, Ben, a thousand times no. I love you more than my life. I never dreamt how utterly one person could become the home of another. “We are in each other’s roots,” you said. Sometimes there is nothing left in me, which I can defend against you, nothing I can lock away and withhold. My whole heart is burning—just with you. My whole life—I know it—everything, would be safe in your hands. That is the truth of many nights such as this, nights that were at once full of bliss and full of yearning, nights that contained the whole meaning of my life—ever since that day in your yellow room, where the early spring still lingers. I know that you are now in your turret; you promised to write to me. You are so near me, Ben, how can I describe it? The quiet night surrounding the little circle of light, is

you—it is your silence, which waits for me. I feel it as if I had second sight, like the country folk at home—a presentiment of things to come.

You saw in the papers what is taking place in Germany. Volker telephoned to us yesterday, actually from the Reichstag. The result of the division and the consequent dissolution was of course no surprise to us. In spite of it, Volker is going to take short leave, and will manage to make up arrears afterwards. I have an unsurmountable feeling of fate, which is fulfilling itself act by act. *Cede Deis*—the gods are against us. The confidence of the people cannot be revived by following the path of reparations and their inevitable consequences.

The moonlight falls so softly on the long green and silver undulations of the meadows. I wish. . . . No, Ben, I am sitting on the arm of your chair. I can draw your head on to my shoulder, close my eyes, and print lingering kisses upon your lips. Will the beating of my heart tell you how unutterably I love you?

MONNA

Jürgen will thank you himself for your note. I thank you for it, too, Beloved. We are looking forward to Wednesday.

LE PRÉ AUX

*Monday midday, July 21,*

The terrifying stillness of midday, hot and brooding, lies over us like a spell. It is extraordinary that you too should feel the special quality of this hour, for I have never mentioned it to you. When you say a word that touches the innermost nerves of your own feelings, it is all up with me! And you do it constantly, my own! In the letter you wrote me after your trip to Mont Cubli, you spoke of the sky "like an empty dark-blue bell," and of the rigid strength of the rocks, the profound silence which makes all things bewitched when the

"gold and blue ocean of air hangs above the meadows." When I read those words such a storm of passion assaulted me that my heart melted! Oh Monna, Monna, everything that had ever served as a standard for daily life dropped out of my consciousness. Everything was changed in the flame of that moment. When I found that we shared this knowledge, that we both knew the secret hour in the solitudes, when everything holds its breath as before a great revelation, something awoke within me that can never be stilled again, can never find rest so long as you and I are separated. I have fought for poise and self-control, for all that could uphold me in your eyes. But in such hours as this, when I am alone in the "divine incantation of a summer noon," alone and yet only a few miles from you, with this letter you wrote me last night, the finest and loveliest of all this summer's letters, what am I to do? What I am to do?

When I came in from the blinding sunshine, it was lying on the table in the cool, dim hall. The house was deathly still, as though all life were stunned by the overpowering energy of the sun. The air is quivering over lake and garden, which is worn out with too much blooming. This room in the tower is a real refuge; it is the place where I come straight to you, even when it contains nothing but books and the breath of the lake; but to-day I come with a burden of longing that no one and nothing can still. I lose myself in your letter—I ought to write you a good sensible, brotherly letter such as I have written a thousand times in thought, for whatever the papers may say I have constantly in mind the vital link that binds me to you and Jürgen. Whatever happens to you happens to me also. It seems that nothing can hold up the present development of world conditions, but at each stage one feels anew that we have come to the end of our wisdom, that what happens now is incalculable and outside our experience, that new groupings of unsuspected significance are beginning to show themselves in the life of nations, both domestic and international.

I am looking forward, or the rational man in me is looking forward, to our talks on Wednesday and Thursday when we make our long trip together. I am purposely bringing the chauffeur, so that I can devote myself entirely to you and your friend and the changes which the new situation in Germany is bringing with it. But the irrational man is so much stronger; he holds your letter in his hands and reads again and again that one short passage, that one sweet melody—for so I perceive it—which formed itself on your note-paper under the falling rose-petals. All the world is in that tune. I hear nothing else. I think only of the hours when I shall see you and hear your voice again, I already feel the foolish, wonderful, seductive jealousy coming upon me, harassing and bitter-sweet—that foolish, inevitable state of mind that one endures with a smile—jealousy that you can dispel with a breath, so long as it confirms and makes perceptible the sweet, enrapturing harmony that exists between us. The irrational man can scarcely endure the hours that separate him from you. “Nothing but you and I!” That deep absorption and submersion of the lover—I experience it consciously, yield myself to it unreservedly. Man is poor until he has felt this. I do not dare to say “whate’er betide,” for every hour of my life (since you became my life) has been so fateful! Yet I know that should I be lonely again, lonelier than ever before, I should not be able to exhaust the happiness you created for me with that one sentence: “I love you more than my life.” What could I ask more on my descending path, what more dare I experience? I need to understand that, Monna. But I must bring to you even this, perhaps the ultimate question; I must beg a word of advice from your overflowing wisdom. It seems almost unbelievable that one person may be so firmly bound to another, feeling the other person as his own deeper, truer self, that even the hardest lot, received from the hand of the loved one, would bring with it the compensation of fellowship with the beloved, even though it should mean the end of life, in the common,



unsentimental meaning of the word, the end of growth and flowering and harvesting, leaving nothing but honest suffering and then a decent finish. I think of that sunny autumn in the mountains of Baluchistan, when my little son was born, who now as a man is preparing to set up his own home. Half my life exceeds the whole span of his. The recognition of this fact brings with it a new estimate of my own position, Monna, of the advanced hour of my life's day. And with it comes a strange, almost sinister feeling—I cannot describe it. But you know all about me without any description on my part. I hold you in my blood! It is a crazy, intoxicating idea, darling, but since I received your letter, I think you hold me in yours, too. What shall I do, Monna, my dearest? I need you with every breath. To be with you is always like coming home. Your eyes have always told me so, but this your letter tells me for the first time in words, and it has swept across me like a hurricane of passion. I am at the end of my tether. You say there is nothing left in you “which you can defend” against me. Do you know what you are doing to me with that wonderful confession, with all your utterances in that low voice with the delicious note I heard when you came that night to comfort me, for that note rings again in this letter? What are you doing? Comforting me? Can there be any comfort if I have to give you up? Can you believe it? Must I do it? Must I give you up for your own sake? That is the gist of all the questions that harass me. No one can answer them but I. I am alone with that question. That is where utter isolation begins. Even you are left behind! You, who are my summer, my life, my garden of flowers. And so I linger awhile and dream my blissful dream a little longer, my dream of summer!

And again and again there comes over me in some mysterious way an indescribable, unconquerable sense of happiness. A heaven-storming, jubilant delight, young and glowing and credulous! It comes of reading your letters, of bearing within me the expression of your face as my most sacred talisman.

Oh, my living spring, I drink of you and slake my thirst!  
I know only that you are there, inexhaustible, and I can  
never lose you, so all is well!

B.

HÔTEL DES AVANTS,

*Night, Monday, July 21, 1930*

My menfolk kept it up very late to-night. Volker was as much overburdened with facts, anxieties and plans, as Jürgen was starving for them, after having been cut off for so long from all the interests that filled his life. I could not but rejoice to see him so keen and alert. Volker thought that he had made a marvellous recovery and that he was at the top of his form again. I realized, with a little thrill of horror, how far, in my heart of hearts, I had strayed from that familiar world, which has now suddenly reappeared with its accustomed and unquestioning claim upon the old, undivided fellowship of thought, action, and life in general. Can one have two countries, Ben—each of them demanding one's entire self?

The one, because each new day has sprung from countless past days, which are embodied in it, with all their meaning, their unfulfilled yearnings, their still unattempted or unsuccessful tasks. One is swept away by this obligation; one's unhesitating acceptance has always been taken for granted; it was life itself, into which one was absorbed. Our soldiers, when they demobilized themselves in 1918, brought with them the expression "break away," which savours of disloyalty.

But that other country, which is you, Beloved! I think I have never felt as clearly as I do this evening that it is life in quite a new sense—it is more than life as it has hitherto been—a resurrection out of unprecedented power into such blessedness as I have never known before. That I am yours, dearest, nearest, truest, youngest of friends, is something

that is no longer in my hands, for I draw my life from you. I feel with every moment the hot blood pouring into me from the innermost chambers of the heart, and am ever and again blissfully dismayed at the flood that has burst its bounds.

Sometimes I wonder if it is not very obtuse and very simple of me to lay all this before you, and to invoke your help as if you were a father, a disinterested friend, in a cause that is your own. Is it wrong of me? It has always seemed to me the natural thing to do, right from the beginning—you know: “elder brother, father, anything.” You are really all this to me, and that is just the wonderful part of it all, to find in you the perfect refuge in all my troubles.

Volker and Jürgen are still sitting together in the dark on Jürgen’s balcony below. Although it is not directly under my windows, I can hear their muffled voices and see the glow of their cigars. And all around us, immeasurably vast, is the expanse of the mountains and the night—sinister and bewildering to the “impressionable heart,” which needs must break away, here or there, from its roots and choose between the inevitable Yea and Nay of its destiny.

And your own roots, Ben, is there no change there? I do not know. But I cannot help thinking of your news of your son and wondering how it will all work out, but I cannot quite visualize it. I think that I know all about you, Ben, but still there is this sequel to a long life without me, and there must necessarily be, in each of us, something remaining in which the other can have no part.

Where will you be, Ben, I wonder, when I say good night to you? As I write your name, that warm flood bursts its gates and flows over me. It will never be otherwise; it will never change. You must feel this, too, Ben. You are so near to me now, when I lay my hands upon your temples, and press my lips to yours, and say God bless you. Good night, Ben.

MONNA

CHÂLET DE LARRINGES,

*Evening, Tuesday, July 22, 1930*

BELOVED,

I have gone off with the children to pass the time as quickly and pleasantly as may be till the car brings you down to lunch with us to-morrow. I must tell you that Constance and I have amicably agreed that I am not to have the lion's share of you, as, according to her vigorous and perhaps truthful contention, has happened before. So you are both to lunch with her, and in the afternoon I shall take you away, but she makes a special point that on Friday evening, when we have taken Jürgen back to Les Avants, you will give her your undivided attention. I hope Dr. Brons will let me put him up.

Yesterday I could think of no better way of winging the leaden hours than to ferret out the children in their haunt in the paddock, where Guy's chickens have grown enormously, and propose a long trip which would involve spending the night somewhere. I gave them thirty minutes to collect whatever they wanted to take and settle whatever needed settling. Semmele beat Guy by a head, but when he came to undress that night he had a suit of pyjamas while she had left hers at home. We caught the steamer for Evian. It was wonderfully cool on the water, and we found great matter for discussion in the history of the country round about—Guy is reading up the history of Geneva with MacAlister, and Semmele follows his lessons with passionate interest—so that we were not a bit bored. On landing we had a long bathe. Semmele swims literally like a fish, and the company of these two lively, intelligent youngsters was a pure delight from first to last. Early this morning we came up here by the funicular, and looked across at Mont Blanc from the tower. The children were interested to hear that to-morrow and the next day I should be so near to it with you. Evidently Semmele had something on her mind; several times she opened her mouth to ask a question, but each time she fell silent again. Unfor-

tunately she will be leaving us on Monday. Every year she finds this break in her holidays disturbing, and yet its actual cause, a visit to her best friend who is the daughter of a head forester, is very congenial and, once there, she thoroughly enjoys herself. But partings are painful. Now the two children are in the castle, in the wonderful old *salle des gardes*, studying the coats-of-arms and inscriptions. Semmele was much impressed by the motto of the city of Geneva, *Post tenebras lux*, so much so that she immediately wrote it down in her private notebook, where everything goes that moves her heart on the fine, breathless, daily adventure that is her life. I had the car follow us, so I got my post, i.e. the letter from you, dearest, which I had been hoping for. Here it is, every single word of it—all you have thought comes as if from the depths of my own heart. I know, I know! I have examined it all, thought it all over with you, so fearlessly and delicately, yes, and brotherly and fatherly, in these last hours. It is a good thing for me that yesterday and to-day I have been able to feel the wonderful boon of water—how good water is!—the boon of children's voices, the quiet depth of the country, the calm of the morning and evening sky. I must be what you, in your letter, want me to be, and I must be it now; I must find the strength to hold out, even though there is nothing more I can do for you with my life and with my love. Perhaps there is nothing. Perhaps that is my fate. I have come too late. Is that the simple truth? It happens probably to many—and yet they have their worth in the world. Now it is the turn of the other, younger people. If only I had suspected the truth of it a few months ago! "They also serve who only stand and wait"—that is an old truth and an old story, and he who has just realized it——

By the same post my son sends me the long letter he promised when last he wrote. His fiancée's parents live in Scotland, and he hopes I shall be able to go and see them. They have not seen her since two years ago when she took her present post in the hospital at Rawal Pindi. One of her

brothers is a Member of Parliament; Pat mentioned his name as one of the cleverest of the younger politicians. Her father was a long time in the India Office—that will interest Jim. Grant—a good name! My boy writes of his Joan with restrained delight. She seems to me a splendid girl. How strange it all is! And you—you know all that I could say. You know everything! Now we must be getting back. The car will bring this up to-morrow morning, and will be ready for you.

I kiss your eyes and your hands.

B.

HÔTEL DES AVANTS,

*Saturday, July 26, 1930*

I have to write indoors in my room to-day; it is raining now, after the storm this afternoon—did it reach you, too, I wonder?—and we are enveloped in clouds of mist. After the sultriness of Geneva yesterday, it is an unspeakable relief. It looks as if it would last, and if it were not that it interferes with Volker's plans I should say: Let it. Unconsciously I was yearning for this change to cooler weather, for a little monotony, for long, solitary hours to myself, in which this life, which has been so concentrated of late, might have space and leisure to expand. They were full of torturing strain—these last few days—especially for you. You were so indescribably kind and friendly. That is just it. The others are all conscious of such a feeling of real, genuine, unaffected good fellowship. You are simply a revelation to Volker. His experience is almost like mine last March, when I gained an understanding, trusty, fair-minded friend, who saw things from the point of view of other experiences than ours, but had the same intuitive sense of causes and essentials. Having been side-tracked in the provinces for ten whole years, Volker is politically much less sophisticated and mature than Jürgen. He brings a fresher mind to bear on every subject. In Berlin he threw himself into politics with all his flaming energy, and he goes

for everything with passionate pertinacity. He is never tired of learning all he can to enable him to form an idea of the powers that are in play here in Geneva. He is always talking about you and what you think and say. He did so just now when we were lingering over tea, almost in the dark, on the balcony, while the storm swooped down on us and then passed over. I was really quite glad of the twilight. In just that way I could have talked about Mr. Tarland myself last March, but I never did, because already there was something that concerned only me. What did you and Volker do yesterday evening, I wonder? You were not in the turret room, I know; that remained in darkness, and is not for the others, is it, our turret room? Volker told me he had played you all the Mozart Sonatas he knows by heart and also the little Fantasia, which I love so much. It must have been lovely. And then he kept you up till past midnight, did he not, asking you for your views on the League of Nations, the Economic Conference and Reparations? The Mozart must have been a wonderful rest. You would hardly believe that Volker, as a musician, could possess such delicacy and charm and play with such airy grace.

It was late, too, before I went to my room, and then Constance appeared once more to bid me a motherly good night, and that meant a continuation of the evening's long *tête-à-tête*. Can you guess what we talked about? I never believed I would do so, but her warm-hearted candour is irresistible. I simply could not put up barriers, certainly not with regard to matters of which, after all, she is already aware. It was all rather indirect. She is an amazing mixture of reserve and frankness. She urged me that it was incumbent upon me to return to Geneva for the great Women's Campaign during the Disarmament Conference this winter, and explained to me all that might be achieved. I do not believe myself that women as yet can accomplish very much, but one ought to be able to enlarge, consolidate and give fresh energies to the circle of men and women who are conscious

of the interdependence of all Europe and of the entire world, and pursue a new system of politics based on that theory. To weld together the spiritual forces of the League, or rather its *ecclesia militans*, which is independent of it and yet its own, on quite different principles from those of dogmatic pacificism, that in itself would be worth living for.

You know, Ben, I wish I could spend the long rainy days, which may be before us, with you. We would forget that anything remains to be decided; we would be together as though our past and our future contained a common eternity; we would live simply by virtue of our profound trust in each other, which can never be deeper or fuller than it is now. How lovely it would be! You yourself are a little weary just now, Beloved; worn out by the exercise of that iron self-control which is contrary both to nature and destiny, when two people are so completely "in each other's roots." When you were sitting in the car beside me, and I felt once for your hand, I could tell . . . I could tell by your smile that you had to force yourself to play your gay rôle as host and leader of the revels. That smile still haunts me. The days were beautiful to me, simply because I love you so unspeakably with every fibre of my being. The others enjoyed it all, as one enjoys Chamonix and the *mer de glace* on glorious days. But during those long evenings on the terrace, which cast a veil of pleasant lassitude on all of us, there were actually hours when the strain was relaxed. That, too, was your doing—like the whole delightful atmosphere of your house. You can suppress yourself so completely, Ben, and remain simply the guardian of other people's comfort. How I love that most chivalrous manliness of yours!

Now I will waft my good night to you, through the dense fog that has gathered outside the door. Your letter of Tuesday is lying in front of me, and I have as yet said nothing to you about it. During the drive, when we were all together, I forced myself—following your example—not even to wish to monopolize you; I did not say two words from which the



others were excluded. I knew that that was what you wanted.

But there is just one thing I must say: "the younger generation" has nothing to do with it. Ah, Ben, you say yourself that hitherto you have always known, what I know so unmistakably, that years count for nothing in the love that unites us. Perhaps it is weak of me to wait till a decision is imposed upon me, instead of making it myself. It is not fair to you, this doom which overshadows me. It is as if the two homes within had to fight it out without my interference, and as if I were bound to abide by the result.

Jürgen has just looked in again to say good night to me. There was something rather fatherly in his manner just as there was something rather motherly in Constance's. He would always understand—that, I think, is what he meant to convey to me. All my gratitude, Ben, is yours, and all my love.

MONNA

LE PRÉ AUX

*Evening, Sunday, July 27, 1930*

When you had gone yesterday with Jürgen and Volker you left behind such an emptiness, such a strange, timeless "pause" in my life, that I seemed incapable of feeling anything. It was as though a door leading to my innermost personal life had been shut. Inside it there was nothing more to be done. It had to be left alone. I surrendered myself gladly to the common daily duties, the needs of other people. The darkening sky, the downward rush of the rain, were a physical relief—you had already reached home when the weather broke, or my anxiety for you would have forced me out of my lethargy. But, as it was, I let everything pass me by, looked at the room, the peaceful, protective walls with new and more sympathetic eyes. There seemed to be an inarticulate encouragement in these inanimate things. . . . To-day with your letter, darling, I felt as though I held your hand in mine. It is just as you say. There is nothing

more to tell—the communion of our minds is the last and deepest comfort. On that long journey, wrapped round by the vital sympathy of you and yours, I got into a state of reckless confidence, a kind of madness, begotten of my great need of you. My heart tugged at its bonds. At all costs, even at the cost of self-deception, I had to find relief, I had to be able to draw breath again. You touch on that point so sweetly, my wise darling, when you say: “We would forget that anything remains to be decided; we would be together as though our past and our future contained a common eternity; we would live simply by virtue of our profound trust in each other, which can never be deeper or fuller than it is now.”

As I sat beside you in the car, talking to the man with whom I was united by so much common thought and instinct, the idea came to me repeatedly with the immediacy of a healthy instinct: why not resign myself to it all with a great effort of the will and thus pay the price of remaining near you as your friend, your close, perhaps your closest friend, but a friend at whose side you would have a life of your own, unfettered by mine, would retain all your own potentialities, all the rights conferred on you by your blood and race. It seemed quite practicable in those great sun-bathed expanses, in the presence of those vast, wind-swept mountains, with their suggestions of strength and vigour. I am quite free. What could prevent me from spending months of every year in the town where you live, from entering your circle of friends, taking part in your work and your ideas, your fine, wise, womanly life, in all those things which advance your powers and occupy your days? There would be plenty of things for me to do around you. Ought I not to compel myself to do this, so that your life, far from being harassed and restricted, would be enriched? Ought I not, being so much older than you, to pursue this as the only solution? And gradually time would come to my aid, with its healing powers, time that can do almost anything if only we let it take its course. Veil on veil would sink on all that glitters so brightly now in the

sunshine. Winter would come upon me. Many a better man has had to walk this path. If he has any decency he just tells himself that the living-room is warm though the roof be white with frost, and he makes no fuss about it. It would mean riding oneself on the snaffle. Oh, Monna! Every time I reached this point in my thoughts, sitting beside you, moving so fast through the lovely, summer landscape, it was as though my heart rose with a jerk from among the ruins, as though of a sudden my will stood there, ice-cold and ice-clear: No, not like that! Never like that! Rather a clean cut! Rather an end of everything, and flight! Rather finish it somewhere, somehow. Away, before the sun sinks! Above all no appearance of compromising with fate, of temporizing with the unattainable. Anything but renunciation! As long as I live I shall never cease to love you with all the ardour of the heart and senses, to desire you as a man should desire a woman, with all his strength and all the fibres of his being, when she belongs to him by nature and destiny! How I want to kiss you for that phrase, Monna, my beloved! But I dare not kiss you to-day, not with a single thought—I dare not think of your lips or your eyes! Not to-day!

Yes, Mozart was like the waters of paradise on that hot, dark evening. It had been a bad day. Shall I confess that in the morning I would rather have spent the day with your brother? We should have smoked in silence and had such a pleasant, peaceful evening. At home here I had to behave quite differently; I had to let you go to your friends at Constance's, and stay behind to perform the ordinary duties one owes to one's guest. And this guest was so real in every word, every movement, quite unaffected in his attitude towards me, though I am so much older than he that I might almost be his father. I need practice in fatherliness, sweetheart! We talked quite objectively about all sorts of things, that vigorous, youthful man, with his unexhausted resources, and I. I watched him carefully, for he is the man who comes next after your brother. It never entered his mind that my

attitude could be other than that of an elderly friend, of one among many who offers you with your full permission his admiration and respect. Still less did the possibility occur to him that you—but that is not even a possibility; it simply does not exist! And then there was my ineradicable tendency to benevolence, which naturally asserted itself when I saw before me a man so naturally honest and upright, taking so for granted the rightness of his hopes and desires. Finally he was a man of your race and of that generation of whom you wrote me unforgettably in one of your early letters; you spoke of those who had never loved, of the dammed-up forces of will and emotion within them. But to finish me off the man plays Mozart magnificently. Oh Monna, it was an evening I shall not easily forget. There is nothing more to be said about it. We know! . . . And you have the wisdom of the heart, the wisdom that can wait. You possess this wisdom because you have the unassailable certainty that life belongs to those who are at the height of their powers, who have time—time to live, time to wait!

To-morrow I will write you a sensible letter, my darling.

To-day everything must remain wrapped a little in the lovely, cool mists—everything, even the fire of life itself! And the day after I shall come to you. I cannot wait longer.

B.

LE PRÉ AUX MÉLÈZES,

*Monday evening, July 28, 1930*

It has been a long day, a really paternal day, and I am thankful for it. This morning Semmele left us. It began so gloomily that I was relieved when Guy made the practical proposal of buying her out of his savings a little silver watch made here in Geneva. The trip to town dispersed the clouds, though Semmele went on resolutely swallowing her tears until the last moment. The little gun-metal watch, that has done duty hitherto, went like a racehorse but had its own private

opinions on the subject of time; it generally finished the day before sunset and from time to time its owner had to put back its hands with a determined twist. Guy had noticed this and thought it time that something was done about it. Early in the morning I observed much clandestine activity up in the tower and when I came up a moment ago, I found a marvellous piece of work there. I should like to leave it all till I can show it you. But you will not be here until you come to Constance's party on Saturday, and by that time it will all be faded. In the centre of a large chaplet of roses is a little book bound by Semmele herself, so you see they have been taking lessons from Pomfret. There is a motto for each month with suitable illustrations. The text reveals a desire to give Uncle Ben the greatest comfort and reassurance in the battle of life! Wise little woman, she must be able to read me like a book. And above it all, in letters formed of rose-petals the words: *Post tenebras lux*. On the first page of the book is an oak-tree, damaged and weather-worn, with the superscription: "After storm and tempest." Evidently it has had a bad time of it, but on the lee-side is a nesting-box for starlings, and on the weather-side a few wretched little buds are shooting. So there is promise of a peaceful old age. The quotations come from her trusty notebook, and each is conscientiously followed by the name of the author in brackets. It is a pity I never had a chance to look into this treasure-house of wisdom. "Whoever is fond of good people cannot be wholly bad (Lessing)." Above this is a sketch of two clasped hands. That is something in my favour, anyhow. "Suffering must purify or of what value is it?" asks Jean Paul trenchantly, and above this is an eye looking sternly into space. "We meet, we part, we lose each other—that is life (Ernst Schulze)." The illustration shows two people, very bent, turning away from each other, the man is composed, the woman weeping floods of tears. Suspicious blurs on the page show that Semmele herself wept as she was doing it. The meaning of the following is more obscure, but all the

more beautiful: "Life is the bloom of death, death is the bloom of life (Count Löben)." The bloom of life is represented by a handsome, flower-covered grave, most inviting, nicely finished off with bows of ribbon and a little cross. For the bloom of death we have a man dragging himself along under a heavy load with the help of a crooked stick. He cannot compete very seriously with the comfortable grave on the same page. But the last page shows the shrewdness of the giver and provokes in me complete agreement: "What would the world be without love? (Simrock)." This is illustrated by an enormous globe. Semmele is absolutely right.

When she had gone, Guy and I got ready the room he is to have next to MacAlister, who is coming to take up his quarters here to-morrow. They will be quite undisturbed; they will have a spare room for any jobs they like to do and their own stairway into the garden. The house will soon be very full. I have given Constance a free hand to invite whom she likes. Delegates of the Women's International League are coming to the League of Nations meetings in September, and they will be followed by others who will make arrangements for the Disarmament Conference. Constance is counting on your spending part of the winter here. You see, I am clinging resolutely to the belief that events will be favourable to me. I dare not think how I had pictured this winter. There is still the blessed possibility—even probability—that you will spend a few weeks here—and if the rest of the time moves too slowly I must come up to Berlin for a while.

We are to have a dog, and it is high time. I have never been without a dog before, but since my old Roy died I have not had the heart to get another. But Guy ought to have one, and the Hargreaves are leaving him theirs, since you cannot take a dog back to England. It is an old English sheep-dog, a breed that is growing rarer. They were bred on the lonely moors, where herds of sheep wander at will over great uninhabited areas; they are exceptionally intelligent and good-tempered, and have bob-tails and long, matted hair. They

are like human beings in the house, and make splendid companions for children. He is being brought here to-day, and Guy is hiding his pleasure behind an air of stoicism.

You have just telephoned! My rational day is ending in a wonderful, hot, turgid joy. Beloved! I must go down to the lake again; it is still clouded and yet fresh after the rain, but far away one can see a few stars between the clouds. Sleep, my darling!

B.

HÔTEL DES AVANTS,

*Afternoon, Monday, July 28, 1930*

Shall we go for a walk on Wednesday morning, Ben, just you and I? Volker and Jürgen are going to spend the forenoon working, and our tea-party is in the afternoon. Five nationalities will be represented, counting the Perriers and a charming Swiss couple who are staying up here. We have seen a good deal of each other during the last few days. Members of a race, in whose scheme of life violence plays no part, have a refreshing clearness and purity about them. Do come up as early as you can—perhaps you could come on Tuesday evening? If we could spend the morning together, with everything else out of the way, and wander far afield, hand in hand—I have discovered an unfrequented path leading to a little meadow with a view of the Dent du Midi—don't you think that those oppressive days would become light and clear again? But even through those days—how well your letter proves it—we went hand in hand. And to know that is not only the deepest comfort, it is the deepest happiness, too, and the ultimate security in this narrow defile of fate. But are you really sure of it? It is difficult, almost impossible, for me to say anything about it, and yet, knowing it, equally impossible to hold my peace—for I do know to the very last detail what it is that has troubled you during these last days. Already we are much too near—that

is the wonderful part about it—for either of us to be able to keep anything from the other. Everything is merged together; each of us is incorporated in the beloved. It is given to few, I think, to be at once lovers and most intimate friends—only to those who already have the experience of a whole past life to bestow. To the friend one dedicates the fettered life; to the beloved the untrammelled heart.

That evening with Volker! I was with you for every moment of it; did you know? If a light had reappeared in the turret room, I do not think anything would have kept me from coming to see you again. Perhaps I should then have said to you what I must now write, “the truth and nothing but the truth.” I said those words once to you playfully. I did not then realize that it is a question, not only of one’s own truth, but of the truth that belongs to other people. *Honi soit qui mal y pense*. I am not sure, Ben, that Volker is quite so unsuspecting as you think. I am positive that he has some inkling of the truth and that Jürgen is trying to open his eyes. But that is not the most important thing I want to tell you. You must know, Ben, that with me, it is not a case of hesitating between two equal loves. After all these months, must I again protest, like a heroine in a novel, that you are my “only love”? Sometimes the tritest words best hit the mark. But it is a different kind of allegiance—a fellowship, in a very real and special sense of the word, such as exists, perhaps, more often among men—our championship of everything we have in common, our country with all that it means, its wealth and its misery and confusion; a solidarity which has lasted all these decades and of which no word is ever spoken, for every sacrifice is taken for granted—everything that one carries within oneself in silence, like roots within the earth. And within that relationship one found one’s appointed task, spiritual and material, unsought, spontaneous, simply by becoming an element of this, one’s own world. It may be that I have an exaggerated idea of the importance of that partnership—I have said so to



myself scores of times. There is no one who cannot be spared. But perhaps it is not so at this moment. Just now, you see, so much has happened all at once—Jürgen's breakdown, and on the top of it this gloomy political situation—I should leave a painful gap. And do you see, it is not my decision concerning you and me that is doubtful—nature and fate took that out of my hands long ago. But to inflict pain, to desert one's post for the sake of one's own happiness—the greater and more certain that happiness, the more insistent grows the question as to whether one has the right to do so. Here, too, my sense of proportion may be at fault. In this circle of your friends, it is borne in upon me that I may find other potentialities, for which there may be actually fewer people available than for filling my place at home. We Germans are rooted in darker depths of our earth than men like you, Ben, who are citizens of a world empire, and to-day we feel that, with a sense of passionate defiance, because we have been thrown back upon ourselves all these ten years of our youth. You understand all this—only I know myself how in these ups and downs one's sense of values becomes distorted. Do not let this happen to yours, Beloved, just because the old Adam happens to be preaching to you. But in you, Ben, even the old Adam himself is a model of chivalrous loyalty.

To-day your little Semmele is leaving you. You will miss her very much. Sometimes, I think, the great emotions take refuge in these lesser sorrows. I will ring you up this evening when she has gone, your little *promessa sposa*. I may be permitted for once to comfort "Uncle Ben," when he is alone in his turret room. Perhaps she is a better hand at it than I am. This evening Volker and Anne are going to play to us—a lovely accompaniment to my thoughts to you. And to-morrow evening, or early on Wednesday morning, you will be with me.

You shall help me to choose a place for our tea-party. I thought at first of turning it into a picnic, and having it right away from the hotel. But when you told me that your

native servants used to call a picnic—that incomprehensible entertainment of the white man—*pagal ke khana*, I was afraid that the distracting circumstances of a “crazy banquet” might interfere with conversation.

It will be pleasant to make my preparations with your help.  
From morning till night,

Utterly yours,

MONNA

LE PRÉ AUX MÉLÈZES,

*Thursday evening, July 31, 1930*

I feel as though I had spent a week with you, darling. The divine freshness of those hours together completely fills me. Two evenings, two mornings—but between them a whole day of life. Oh my queen! It was beautiful beyond all comprehension. The wonderful sureness of life in that deep communion! When you talk I hear my own heart speaking; you are all my thoughts. How can it be so perfect? When we walked through the meadows in the morning, time was extinguished. It was a moment of eternity—for ever so! Your hand in mine—sweet, wise hand that I could always hold, always take when I wanted it. I have been astonished over and over again at the measureless need I had to feel you near, or just to see you. In all my life I have never really needed anyone, really needed them as one needs air to breathe. How is it possible that we could experience this, we two whom everything has conspired to alienate—current ideas, blood, the times in which we have gained our experience and knowledge, the different standpoints from which we look on life, even our temperaments, for we are so gloriously distinct and yet so marvellously identical, my sweet! I never grow tired of seeking and finding this deep and often unspoken union. The effect when we were among others was often indescribable. How do you come to communicate this subtlest, gentlest influence, so that I have not room in myself to contain

it all? What was the most beautiful thing in that unforgettable afternoon among all our friends, with its rich exchange of talk? It was the deep joy of communion between us, which showed itself so often, so directly, so unexpectedly in all the vital matters we discussed, and to-day there are so many of them!

The men and women of our day bear a great responsibility, which no one can take from us; we hold the fort, we have to guard the track, which is so easy to obliterate, for those who come after. This is my firm conviction. Everything has become quite primitive without path or signpost, almost overnight. There is nothing which stands above question. I loved you so desperately in your calm, your shrewdness, your kindness, in the deep altruism that is the mark of your character. But perhaps after all the loveliest thing of that afternoon was that you were unconsciously the centre of it all, standing between the generations, familiar and dear to the young, and to the old—well, age was represented by three shrewd judges, and we all just fell in love with you, Constance, Jim and I! We told each other quite coolly and at considerable length. I found it easy to talk about you—indeed I wanted nothing better! For there was so much to say that I could not keep it to myself any longer. And yet perhaps most beautiful of all was the joy of remembering those morning hours before they came and took you from me—those hours when we were alone, and so sufficient to each other, filling the whole world and the bottomless depths of the heart, just we two! Do you know, when I think of that morning it all comes back again? Your little ring, dropped so playfully into my coat-pocket, there by the stream from the glacier, must stay there now for safe keeping. With laughing eyes and grave mouth you refused, my queen, to take it back or even to let me exchange it for another. If you were not so utterly enchanting and did not enrapture with a mere glance my every drop of blood, I should have much to say about this, but as it is I have nothing. Everything is in your hands. Your last letter is my

breviary, from which I derive contentment and devotion; it has made me realize more firmly than before that you shame us like the red of dawn, you source of light and warmth! I have been examining myself severely. I must seem a crass egoist to you; I do not deserve the name of your friend! I fail where I ought to stand firm, if I am to hold the pass, Monna! I can go no farther rationally, a step at a time—my heart wants to hear the word “friend” from your lips but it thirsts for the word “beloved,” it thirsts, Monna! In its need and the tumult of its happiness it cannot go rationally on its way, it wants to soar with the wings of an eagle. But it has given me a violent shock, darling; it has taught me that I think too much of myself and not exclusively of you and of what is best for you! That thought haunts me, sweet. God protect you! . . . Good night!

B.

HÔTEL DES AVANTS,

*Thursday evening, July 31, 1930*

MY BELOVED BEN,

My day with you—for the afternoon, too, was part of my day with you, doubly significant in that friendly gathering—was too lovely for words. There is not a cloud on my happiness. It made such a perfect whole. First the morning with just our two selves, and then the afternoon with our friends.

Anne stayed on up here, and we continued to argue, merrily and spiritedly—my menfolk as well. She is so clever and has such a fresh intelligence; it does us all good. She wants to come to Berlin this winter, if I am there. We might undertake the great work together for which we have been collecting material here. She, for North America. It would be most useful.

But to-day we amused ourselves with something quite different. Here it is. Anne is responsible for the English

version. We thought it would be fun to have a record of the discussion at yesterday's party, so we sat down to it the first thing this morning. Perhaps it will amuse those who took part in it. Could you, do you think, have some copies made of the English version?

Beloved, we shall not see each other again till Saturday, when we meet at Constance's farewell party. There is always something rather sinister about a farewell party. But after all, we are not going away ourselves till Wednesday, so it does not really affect us yet.

Isn't Jürgen full of life and energy now? Hitherto you had seen him only when he was tired out. What was so enchanting was the secret sense of personal contact underlying all the general conversation. It was so inspiring and it made me so happy. I felt as if we had never so completely and utterly given ourselves to each other, as at the very end, when our eyes met in farewell, just as you were taking the steering-wheel. My senses are quivering with it still, as if each moment renewed it. Constance, of course, saw it and favoured me with an extra nod from the back of the car, just as if she were bestowing her blessing.

Volker, by the way, is considering deeply why it is that we have no enchanting old ladies like Constance. He would be perfectly willing to leave the conduct of the world in her hands.

I love you above everything.

Your MONNA

A Round-Table Discussion on European affairs, in which five nations were represented: England, Canada, France, Germany, Switzerland; and three generations: the pre-War, War and post-War, aged respectively between fifty and sixty, thirty and forty, twenty and twenty-five. Both sexes were represented in each nationality and each generation.

SCENE: The Park of the Hôtel des Avants. July 1930.

It should be noted that the occasion was a tea-party, and that there had been no intention of engaging in a discussion on European affairs, and still less of recording it. At the same time there was not one among us who was not, in his heart of hearts, unceasingly anxious about the world crisis and its effect on the destinies of Germany. During these weeks on the Lake of Geneva, in a happy holiday atmosphere, in which new friendships had been formed and earlier friendships had ripened rapidly, many conversations had taken place between the different generations and nationalities, in *tête à tête*, and in larger groups, by day and by night, sailing and riding, in the library, at tea-time in the drawing-room, and up among the snows. An exchange of ideas between many nationalities on the one great subject: Europe and the world.

Thus it came about that in the middle of tea-table gossip about the best golf links, the best route up the Dent du Midi, the library of the International Labour Office, and, with more serious intent, the British Empire in the East and the prospects of the Disarmament Conference, the great subject suddenly cropped up. There was a pause in which the warm, resolute voice of Lady Constance Endicott was heard:

"Yes, but for God's sake, if you are convinced that everything is in such a muddle, what are you going to do about it?"

Everyone listened involuntarily to hear what answer Pat—to whom the question was addressed—would make.

He shrugged his shoulders:

"Perhaps one should ask, what *can* one do?"

"Nonsense. You must decide first what you want to do, and then you may ask how you can arrive at it. You youngsters always put the cart before the horse. That won't get you anywhere."

(We all know, and delight in, Lady Constance's impatient energy.)

"Yes, but let him say what we can do. Go on, Pat," said Anne Nielsen.

"Whom do you mean by 'we'?" asked Pat. "Governments? Or ourselves?"

"Ourselves, of course," several voices answered. "It is we who take the trouble to think, who have the freedom of our own opinions, and who have no idea how we are going to carry on—we, who are the intellectual vanguard."

"The moral vanguard, I hope. I am sick of all the intellectuals in Europe. They look upon the history of the world as an arena, in which to hold their tournaments of wits."

"Bravo!" cried Jürgen from the bottom of his heart, and kissed Lady Constance's hand.

"You must say more than that, dear friend," said Lady Constance firmly, but at the same time encouragingly. "There are many men who say 'Bravo,' when one puts in one's oar for once. But usually that is as far as they go. You, however, have had more experience than these young people, who took no conscious part in the War. It is up to you to take the lead."

"Only in this discussion and at your command. I am not sure whether in the present crisis, one generation can give a lead to other generations, or one country to other countries. All experience is important, from whatever source it is derived. We, who fought in the War, ought to make every effort to understand the attitude of the post-War generation towards life. It is most important. And it is very difficult for us to do so because, though the times were abnormal, our own youth was forced into a mould by a very plain duty, which was incumbent on us all. The post-War generation, too, is living in abnormal times, but it has no plain, straightforward task to fulfil. That must be very hard to bear. Youth seeks and doubts. How can it help doubting? But to go back to the beginning: where are we to look for the reason why 'everything is in a muddle'?"

"In the peace treaties," exclaimed Lady Constance and

Hans Karl Kessler in one breath. They smiled at each other, he gratefully, and she with motherly kindness.

"But after all, the War came first," said Maisie, always on the spot when Hans Karl expresses an opinion. "Was it only the peace treaties that were bad, while the War itself was good?"

"The World War was a result," said Anne Nielsen fiercely. "It is capitalism, it is unplanned economy, which has thrown the whole world out of gear and will continue to do so."

"Bolshevism then?" asked Pat.

"That is just the question. If things go on like this it is dead sure to come. As an experiment on the part of the despairing masses," Anne replied.

"If Europe can no longer exist, there is bound to be a social revolution—an economic convulsion of nature, just as in Russia there was a political one," Pat added.

"But it would not be a solution," cried Monica. "Even if another country—and it would certainly be our own turn next—should make the experiment. Industrial capitalism would still continue to exist. Only the controlling power would change hands."

"Or appear to do so," said Volker. "But is it really the working man who governs in Russia?"

"In any case: every proletarian revolution—and in the present state of the world, all revolutions are necessarily proletarian, however they begin—will aim at nothing except the reversal of power within the limits of the existing system. What the masses are out for is social revenge, and an exact one. They simply want to change places. Revolution, when it is an economic convulsion of nature due to unemployment, is inevitably lacking in constructive power. It rushes past the problem. In every sense."

"Then the task is to avoid it, if possible," said Dr. Werner, who is a Swiss.

"That is too negative," Ben broke in. "We must bring about a genuine revolution, instead of waiting for one to break out."



Constance and the young people clapped their hands.

"It is certainly a question," he said discouragingly, "whether there is still time for us to do so."

"What is a genuine revolution?" asked Monsieur Perrier.

"Well, to begin with, one that is under proper leadership," said Ben, "not a mere explosion of elemental social forces with revolutionary heroes of a day at the barricades."

"Was the Revolution of 1789 a genuine one?"

"Yes. Not in all its phases, but in its essential purpose. Its fundamental ideas were adequate and fruitful. It always appears to me to have been magnificent," said Pat. "I should like to have taken part in it."

"More shame to you." This, of course, from Constance. "We do not want guillotines again. You had better state what the object of Ben's revolution is to be. Then you will soon see that guillotines are useless."

"The effects of the Revolution of 1789," declared Hans Karl, "lasted in Europe till 1914. In other parts of the world they are probably still continuing. But here in Europe a new act has begun."

"What is the new act called?" asked Tom, coming to his mother's support. "Who are the actors in it?"

"In my opinion," said Jürgen pensively, "Kessler and Mr. Dunmore are right. The nineteenth century must be conquered just as the eighteenth was. The violence that accompanied the Revolution has never seemed to me an essential part of it. If you are building a street you have to blow up an obstacle now and then. The nineteenth century invented such complicated institutions that it can never be effectively revolutionized by undisciplined force. As Mr. Tarland says, it can only be achieved by intellectual leadership. Force would only hinder. This, then, is my answer to Tom Endicott's question about the new act and its actors. The theme of the nineteenth century may have been freedom, that of the twentieth is leadership. The actors, if the act is to be properly played, must be men who see in their own

national problems, problems that concern the whole world, and handle them accordingly. They know that economic crises cannot be isolated. Above all, they know that psychological crises are infectious. Frontiers impose no spiritual guarantee."

"Is the stage set in Geneva?"

"Do you mean that freedom has had its day?"

The two questions were uttered simultaneously.

"No," said Jürgen, in answer to the second. "But in the course of a century freedom ought to have found its place. It ought to have permeated men and institutions, and to exist now as an element, a standard, so that without misgiving we could turn to the other task—that of leadership. The forces released by the nineteenth century—technological progress, transport facilities, the circulation of money—demand world organization on a vast scale. But this cannot be achieved by means of the feeble action of the interested masses—as a German Minister said recently—and certainly not by means of the uncanalized streams of popular instincts."

"But has freedom, in this country, found its place in the sense you mean?" asked Tom.

"The crisis of democracy," cried Pat. "Europe is full of the struggles of new systems of government."

"Freedom cannot be arranged in paragraphs; it is a matter of political culture, it seems to me, in fact, of general culture," said Ben. "Political culture may be on a higher plane than constitutions and laws. On the other hand, the best of constitutions is liable to be abused."

"Then are these constitutional struggles a demonstration against the political culture of the present day?"

"They are first of all a protest against the leadership of to-day. It is only when it proves unequal to its task that doubts arise concerning the structure of a state," said Volker.

"But the people—'the interested masses,' as your Minister correctly described them—is not that remark a proof that the

best leaders can be rendered helpless by parties? Isn't that always happening?" asked MacAlister.

"That again is a proof of the inadequacy of party government. Parties recognize no higher authority than their own and yield to the temptations of democracy. They have chosen the easy way. They appeal to the instincts of their followers—instincts not constitutionally constructive, but resulting in packed meetings and heavy polling," said Volker from bitter experience.

"That began in the War," Lady Constance declared vehemently and angrily. "That was the great Fall of Man. The masses were bribed and swindled as never before, and there was no turning back. It will always remain the classic example of how whole nations could be deceived. People became accustomed to an unscrupulous demagogy. It has developed into a system. No wonder that the leaders of to-day find their work cut out for them. It serves them right."

"But there is another consequence of the War to be considered," said Monica, "that which the Spaniard Ortega y Grasset calls the rising of the masses. I should prefer to call it the awakening of the masses. The War, and especially the issue of the War, brought this about to an extent that could never have been foreseen. That attitude of suspicious alertness on the part of the masses who were formerly objective. And the leaders were not equal to these demands that were made upon them. Those men, who act as the mouthpiece of the masses, who are simply the spearhead of a movement, became articulate. And then the perilous period of inflation supervened, which led to the abuse of power. There, surely, you have the crisis of democracy."

"The deciding factor for a state and for an intelligent world policy," said Lord Endicott between two puffs of his pipe, "is an independent, incorruptible, intrepid and cold-blooded governing class. And that you cannot create from one day to another. There are too many political windbags."

"But where can we find such leaders nowadays? Why is

it that all administrations are so incompetent? Surely that is what they are, the old as well as the new? Is it the system that is at fault?"

"Undoubtedly," said Pat very decidedly. "The capable men, the original thinkers, are not given a chance. The older men do not venture to leave the beaten track, although they have long since realized that it leads to ruin. They are afraid to take a risk."

"The difficulty lies in the uncertainty of the task," said Jürgen soothingly. "What ought to be done to-day for the economic and political reorganization of the world, or shall we say for the consolidation of Europe, goes far beyond everything that, in a wide sense, could ever be popular. Nothing is popular, except whatever remedy for the misery of the individual lies nearest at hand. Politicians, however, only exist on popularity."

"But there is also the question of responsibility, as well as of popularity," Monsieur Perrier broke in. "The political leader is responsible to his country. Can he risk the interests of his country for the sake of a very vague possibility? It is a question whether Europe will ever find the philosopher's stone, by whose magic it hopes to charm its powers into a harmonious whole."

"It is indeed a question. There I agree with you," said the elder Kessler. "But Velmede has already said so. To-day, when any great political question is under consideration, we cannot avoid the deliberations that arise, as to whether the interested national policy of more than thirty European states is likely in the long run to further the national interests of each one of them. The mere mention of the number brings home to one the absurdity of it all. Every policy concerned with purely national interests has, in the present state of Europe, the same element of risk. The plain fact is that we are confronted by a new set of problems."

"And have not the courage to tackle them," exclaimed Pat, Anne and MacAlister almost in one breath.

"The whole world policy of the present day seems to be one monstrous product of universal panic," Anne added. "Each nation is trying to escape from the consequences of a state of the world, with which we can no longer cope."

(Great applause.)

"But there lies the sinister peril of the whole European situation," said Kessler. "The nations themselves are living under the pressure of this dread and that makes them politically dangerous."

"And this dread seems to be at the root of that belief in force," said Monica. "In countries where there is economic distress, the struggle for mere existence must necessarily become ruthless. We can no longer shut our eyes to this. The nations are preparing for the moment when it is finally proved that Europe has not room for all. The military substitute for the economic inability to find a way out—the *ultima irratio*."

"But surely the Great War was that, fundamentally," said Maisie.

"Failure does not prevent recurrence," Dr. Werner declared.

"Everything points in that direction. But who is to prevent it? That is what you had better discuss," pleaded Constance.

"Who believes in the League of Nations?"

"Who believes in the British Empire?" came from another corner.

"I do," said Jürgen to the second question. "The great colonial powers—whatever form their colonial enterprise may take—are the main support of Europe. For even economically speaking, Europe exists by virtue of its authority as the centre, whence those influences emanate, which have set their mark upon the world. From motives of expediency, Germany should be allowed to become a colonial power again, for the sake of extending this front."

"Do we still believe in our power to stamp our mark upon the world?" said Pat dubiously.

"There is in any case at the present moment no other

influence that can lead to the solidarity of the human race," said Ben. "And the rest depends on the Europeans themselves. The fact that they contrived to bring the whole world into their war, certainly proves how capable they were in those days of pulling strings. Now they are in honour bound to throw their weight into the opposite scale. To be sure, faith is needed for that—and not faith alone. Some power, such as that which inspired the Pilgrim Fathers—or perhaps, after all, just the conviction that there is still some service we can render the world. Our right to govern India is based wholly on the fact that we are able to be useful to the people. Certainly any other claim would collapse nowadays."

"You intelligent defeatists," said Basil to Pat, "have so many inspirations and ideas that you cannot see the realities before your eyes: that which has been built up and still stands firm. And thus you increase the danger."

"The colonial powers may be all right," said Maisie. "But who is to prevent the Powers in Europe from still further undermining each other's authority? The League of Nations?"

"The next few months will show," said Constance ironically.

"The League of Nations is premature," said Volker, and saw astonished faces all around him. "By that I mean that co-operation in such a League is only possible among nations who have a perfectly secure and unconstrained national consciousness. In the present state of Europe, national consciousness is hyper-sensitive: the victors are anxious to assert their victory, morally and politically; the ambitious new states are seeking to legitimize themselves; the nations that remained neutral feel that they are unimportant, and yet that they have a mission, while the vanquished themselves are passionately reacting to their humiliation. It is no mere accident that ten years after the War, under the very eyes of the League, in its very precincts, nationalism has sprung up. It clings like cobwebs to all negotiations. It is manifest in every question. No one has the courage for anything. Speaking as a German, I feel that only through the complete rehabilita-

tion of the vanquished can all the hypersensitiveness which afflicts all other nations as well, be purged away."

"No one here," broke in Constance vehemently, "can be of two minds about it."

"But perhaps this balanced self-respect, this unconstrained national consciousness to which you refer, may be a plant of slow growth," said the Swiss, "not fostered by external action—though that is a necessary preliminary—but by recovery from within."

"And perhaps that can never be," said Monica, "until Europe has a livelier sense of its common destiny, its common historical task. In co-operation an even balance is established spontaneously. Anything else is objectless. But that is undoubtedly a matter of faith, as Ben says. Towards what common faith will Europe guide its thirty states?"

"There has twice been an *Imperium Romanum*," said Monsieur Perrier.

"There will never be a third. The spiritual conditions necessary for a new epoch of the Middle Ages are lacking nowadays. Europe has become too multiform," said Kessler with a burst of Protestantism.

"In Europe," said Anne rather contemptuously, "one has always to look for a historical precedent for every new situation. How terrible that must be! Why not derive one's faith from the present and the future. The past is played out."

"Miss Nielsen is right," said Jürgen, "precedents are dangerous, although it may not be quite true that the past is 'played out.' If Europe considers itself worth preserving, it must know why. I myself see its claims to survive in its very multiformity. In a narrow space, it has mustered a matchless array of historical personages, it has shown a faculty for readapting itself with incredible speed, and it has developed a medium, by means of which every conceivable form of culture can be understood, and every conceivable situation can be handled. What other culture can be said to have attained exactly this? Asiatic cultures are confined within

their own intellectual limits, and are, though perhaps in the grand sense, static. As the exponent of this, its special power, Europe is more than ever necessary to the world."

"But may not this unlimited power of adaptability prove a dissolving and destroying element?" objected Volker. "Has not Europe permitted a rootless and characterless type of civilization to evolve?"

"I do not consider men of European races to be lacking in character," said Ben. "On the contrary, it seems to me that they bear the stamp of their German, French or English idiosyncrasies to a remarkable degree, far more so than is the case with primitive races that have no history."

"That really seems to me a natural consequence," Monica continued. "Culture increases the national formative powers. And that is why the European can do what perhaps no other race on earth can do: impress upon the individual the stamp of a common experience. Modern Europeans can be very different, and yet understand each other perfectly. This aptitude for mutual understanding is the secret of their preponderance in the world. If they came to distrust this faculty, if each of the thirty states began to concentrate on its own peculiar form of nationalism, it would be the first step towards abdication. I can see no advantage that would be sufficient compensation."

"Perhaps, in spite of Anne Nielsen, there is something to be said for the inheritance which Europe has to administer," said MacAlister. "By Europe I mean, not the geographical term, but the nations who have accepted European culture; the Powers that have adopted Christianity and scientific knowledge. It is surely no accident that all the intellectual forces of the world have sprung from European soil."

"Christianity!" said Constance, the incorruptible. "If only one could see some signs of it! Christianity in Europe has been compromised as never before."

"Another reason for exerting fresh powers of determination,"



said Ben reassuringly. "Let us at last frankly accept our heritage."

"I am convinced of all this," Pat confessed, "like a good European, as the German philosopher says. But is there still time for us to form an intellectual front, which shall save Europe? Have we not been forestalled by very different forces? Are not very different things about to happen immediately? And do not the new developments, which occur each day, tend to restrict more and more our possibility of action?"

"Certainly," Jürgen agreed, "very different developments are imminent, especially in the sphere of political economy. And yet it seems to me as if one ought to preach to mankind, with tongues of fire, the vital importance of Europe's existence, and to give its actions a very different backing of historical seriousness and far-sighted responsibility. Whether we shall succeed in averting, yet again, new catastrophes, no one can say. Perhaps people like ourselves will prove to be no more than an Ark of Noah, in which something may be saved wherewith to make a new beginning."

"No," said Lady Constance energetically, and brought the discussion to an end. "As long as the flood is simply the result of the blindness and perversity of living men, whom God has endowed with understanding, which they are free to use every day of their lives if they choose to do so, there must be some other way of escape for you young people than setting at once to work to build an Ark."

LE PRÉ AUX MÉLÈZES,

*Sunday morning, August 3, 1930*

MONNA,

I must go away immediately, without seeing you again, or I shall have no strength left. My dearest, beloved above all others, let me tell you as clearly as I can that you must not think I am out of my mind. Last night!—I must see it calmly, calmly, and as it was; and I must see it through your eyes

too, for in all my despair it is incredibly true that even this, even this that suddenly flashed between us, double-edged and unnamable, is a bond, a common bond! You must listen to me, for there is nothing we cannot know about each other. I shall write to you as soon as I get to Scotland, but just this for now, so that you will have no need of the others, who know nothing. All they know is that I am driving Pat and Bertrand into France on their way to Calais. I shall tell Constance briefly what she ought to know. She will ask no questions. I must go away and I must not see you. Forgive me, my dear, but I cannot help it! I am at the end of my strength, and that is the truth.

I have really known for a long time, and still better since your letter of last Monday, before I came up to see you. I cannot count on time, as does the heart that has no patience and no understanding! I was armed and ready for whatever you chose, my dearest; I wanted nothing more than to let you have your will, for you know your own mind and that my life has no meaning except with you and in you. But I never dreamed even in a nightmare that anything could bring such affliction to you—for that is what I read in your eyes—that anything could wrench you from my arms with such irresistible compulsion, snapping the ties that bound us together. And yet it happened—something so powerful, so completely outside our conscious will. Never were we surer of each other than last night. Is that not so? I am so desperate that I know nothing with certainty. But after the tension of the last few weeks those hours at your side, yesterday afternoon and evening, were heaven. I take refuge in that knowledge; I count up all the things that bound us together so marvelously, more closely than ever before! But I cannot forget the moment—it returns again and again to my mind—when the first notes of that unutterable music broke over us. Never, never shall I forget how you drew yourself up—we were standing in the doorway that leads to the garden, and you were leaning against my shoulder—how you turned from me,

for the music seemed to summon you away, giving you wholly back to your essential soul, enwrapping you, extinguishing me from your consciousness. That is how it seemed to me. . . . Darling, what wounded me most was the expression of your face; you had gone far away, you were deeply moved as though by the realization of some new truth—and that is what was so painful to me. I felt as though I had foreseen that moment, as though it had been coming to meet me by a thousand paths in the last few weeks. At that time I understood more clearly what was happening than now in my bewilderment. I understood with a terrifying sense of inevitability why we were all constrained to stand and listen, plucked out of the easy interchange of dancing and talking; it came from immeasurable distances, from unfathomable depths. I knew why Volker had to play the *Appassionata* at that moment. And as he did so something burst in upon us which for a long while had been a secret to us whom it concerned, but now was made manifest. In that moment a great darkness descended on my soul. Just because I understood this something—and despite my darkest and most secret fears had to stand firm against it—there was, as it were, a hidden bond between it and me, and I had to accept its profound validity. It shattered in me that wonderful, almost instinctive sureness that we belonged to each other, you and I; it was as though all the questions were dragged up from the depths and resuscitated by the look in your eyes. I cannot find that certainty again. I had never seen you as you stood there then, so beautiful, so pale, under the spell of the music. I still feel, as if it were a physical disorder, the realization that the ground can gape beneath one's feet, that sometimes one can only endure events instead of directing them. Everything was strange; you were gone; the company broke up and silently departed. It was like a dream—and it is so still.

Beloved, I want you to understand just what I mean. I am going, not because I feel that I must leave behind my life, my love—you—that we must part for good. Such a belief

would be death. But I must go to give you some time—and with God's help I must not make it too short!—completely free of my yearnings and my needs, and the trouble they cause you. I must go so that you shall be free to find the way to your soul, free to spend yourself on your brother and your friends, and on yourself. I realized this with an intensity I had never even suspected when I heard that mighty German music, and that makes me, too, belong to you to a small extent, for from earliest childhood German music has been the holiest thing I know. When one treads the ground where holy things are made manifest, one "takes off the shoes from off one's feet." In such circumstances one is transformed, the great is revealed as great, the true as true. There is no escape; one must stand one's ground. Suddenly there arose before my soul the great reproach—the knowledge that my exacting, turbulent love had laid a burden upon you, you who accept responsibility with unquestioning readiness and bear it without complaint, though you already bear a heavier load than I knew, Monna. . . . I must let the healing waters of time flow over it all, while I am far away from you. I wanted nothing but happiness for you, Beloved—every hour of my life was consecrated to this end. And if this is not to be, I will not have it at any price, Monna!

I must make myself do something sensible. I am going to Scotland to visit the family of my son's fiancée. He has asked me to do it. I am taking the car—it requires action and concentration. A railway journey would be unendurable. I enclose my address. Write to me, please! I expect to be there in six to eight days.

My love, my all, have patience with me!

B.

HÔTEL DES AVANTS,

*Sunday, August 3, 1930*

O, Ben, what am I to do now? I cannot reach you—not for days and days. And I would not if I could. For I know

myself. . . . I knew it already, in the sleepless hours, after the party had broken up last night, that something had happened, something that could not be, must not be, swiftly effaced. You feel that you must break away from me for a time. That is what you say. And you say, too, that you have come to the end of your endurance. Ah, to think that you had to write such words! And I cannot help you, cannot simply restore you to the peace of these last days, that peace which you say yourself was so perfect that all one's wishes seemed fulfilled. Every minute of my life is charged with wild, despairing yearning.

I did not attempt to write until I arrived back here. Down in Geneva, I think I played my part tolerably well. We all made light of your sudden decision. In the "eyes of the world" it was nothing out of the way. The monstrous, the utterly incredible part of it—that you should run away from these last days of ours—that, indeed, only I could measure. There was Constance, of course. But Constance remained amazingly serene. I really think she does not take it seriously. She did not say a word, but, quite spontaneously, radiated imperturbable, cheerful confidence; like her own dewy garden in the morning sun. And strangely enough—I am ashamed to admit it to myself—this was something of comfort to me. My menfolk, needless to say, have a better idea of the situation than anyone else, but to speak of it is beyond us. . . .

But now I must really try to explain things to you a little. Oh, Ben, how can one find words for what is unfathomable, nameless, far beyond the bounds of our comprehension?

Yet I must not leave you, Ben, with the impression that that overpowering hour has severed me from you. It is not true. You felt that it was so, because, like myself, you were overwhelmed and swept away, until you thought that there was nothing left to which you could cling. That was how it happened.

The evening was so supremely, coruscatingly gay, beyond all mere conventional merriness. One could feel the sparks

flashing from one person to another. All our secret personalities seemed to be released. We had never felt so aware of one another. And then the dancing: Lord Endicott with his casual, taciturn, chivalrous fatherliness; Pat, like Hamlet in his unclouded hours, dancing as if he were doing a sword dance, so dashingly and cleverly; Basil, bubbling over with the pure, confident joy of life. Constance and the girls, so enchanting to Volker, like summer breezes blowing through a sturdy oak. And you yourself, Ben. Did it ever for a moment mean less to me than to you, that with every fibre of our being we sought and possessed each other and talked together? Life danced like a golden ball in the jet of the fountain.

And out of doors the summer night with its threat of thunder. The stars swayed like glittering nets in the quivering air, and sheet lightning flashed from mountain to mountain, as if the gods were waging war. And the air was swooningly heavy with the scent of the lilies in Constance's garden.

And then—suddenly all was still, and there came that soft, compelling summons. The night poured in and submerged us all. So it seemed to me. It quenched and drowned all that was bright and conscious and controlled, and "the word was with the waters"—the blind, dumb powers. I have never yet really understood the *Appassionata*, that mighty conflict between the surging, challenging forces and the final, inevitable, sweet surrender. And this time it was as if one were watching a conflict within oneself: the command of destiny, controlled and imperious, and the promise, sweet and timorous; the dark question, and the low, tender, anxious answer, and then the forced descent into the bosom of those two deep chords, in which the whole doom of love—passion itself—is contained. And then, ever and again, the feeling of confidence bursting forth and seeking to expand upon the wings, strong or gentle, of a melody. And then that ghostlike blast of wind coming out of the unknown, when the flood is poured back, unresisting, into that dark lap. "But love forces us all down into the depths." And now that defeat is brought about, with

what pleading, passionate avowals in the transition phrases, what impulses of resistance, hesitation, half-glad, half-fearful resignation, and conscious self-immolation. Volker's playing was fabulous. He was not trying to express anything definite. He is a piece of nature, reserved, inarticulate, even with himself. And as an artist, he is objective and faithful. He would never use Beethoven to express his own emotions. But he played the song of destiny, and in its passion revealed us to ourselves in the grip of those powers, who are the final arbiters of our fate, in whose hands we are: the secret, as you say yourself, that we cannot control and cannot penetrate. We can only make blind schemes for our own personal life.

All these emotions rushed through me. I did not sever myself from you, Beloved, in that almost unendurable half-hour—ah, Ben, how could you interpret it thus?—but it brought home to me more clearly than ever before the decision which I must face—alone.

Afterwards I wandered once again with Volker down the broad path between the lilies. When the music stopped, there was a silence, and he went out on to the terrace to break the oppressive pause. We stood for a while by the garden gate, and were reminded of the night of another second of August. It was in our garden in Burgsteinfurt, before the two boys went off to the front. Before we returned to the terrace he said to me—in just a few, very brotherly words—something which I may perhaps be able to tell you some day.

It is true, Ben, it went too deep. The bolt did not fall between us; it struck us both with a single flash. It is too big a thing; it cannot be swept aside with mere words, in the space of a few days. These will be very difficult weeks, but in spite of everything—I thank you, Beloved. And I love you—with all the power of this night.

Your MONNA

GLENCORVIE, PERTHSHIRE, NORTH BRITAIN,

August 8, 1930

BEST BELOVED,

Your letter falls like heavenly dew upon my breathless longings. I was parched! I can only hold your hand, blind and dumb, but saved by the letter you have written me, the letter you have written me! I do not know how the days have passed—one can go through life with one's heart bolted and barred against oneself, and no one knows. I felt such an uncontrollable longing to hear from you that I left the car in London with Pat and Bertrand, boarded the Flying Scotsman and travelled through the night as far as Perth. They will follow at a more leisurely pace in the car, for they also have been invited to come here. On "the twelfth" grouse-shooting will begin on the moors and every country house will be full of guests, so I am making this visit now before going back to England. I must take myself in hand and try to tell you everything, my only beloved, my heart and soul! Actually I do nothing day and night but talk to you without ceasing, in an indescribable state of misery and restlessness and happiness and hope. . . . Now I can think of nothing but your name—Monna! Monna! Monna! The world is alive again, and is no longer inanimate theatrical scenery, through which one goes without purpose, without contact or desire! . . . Now there streams into me like a flood the uncontrollable yearning for a kiss, a single kiss. I am sitting at my writing-table, how long I have been here I do not know; my head is propped in my hands and I see you, I just look at you and tell myself—myself rather than you—how I love you, how I love you, *how I love you!* Is it really only six days since I saw you last? What am I doing here? Why all this unreality? And yet—oh darling, I must hold out, I must call up all the reason and will-power I possess. I must hold out for a time, for I do not yet know whether I am a monstrous egoist, a complete madman to wish to fetter your life, your flowering summer, to my life. Who am I? What can



**I give you? What have I that the love of a younger man could not give you a thousand times better, a man who perhaps knows you more intimately, understands you more fully? He must indeed understand you, for he belongs to your own nation; he knows all that you know, that you have suffered with your fellow countrymen through all these years. Oh Monna, you truest, you freest of women! What can I give you? So I must cling tightly to the blind instinct that warned me not to lay anything on your shoulders that might become a burden and a load. I must remember that however intense my desires and longings; and the more they overwhelm me, the more strictly I must hold to it. These things absorb all my thoughts. I must not see you for a while; here in Scotland I am not far enough away, not sure enough of myself—already I have considered a dozen times how quickly I could get over and spend a few days with you, just a few days! No, that cannot be! Come into my arms, best beloved, and let me tell you of these wearisome days, everything just as it is, just as it is and must be—my duty, my unquestionable duty!—and give me your assurance that I must still go forward with it.**

My son's weekly letter arrived just as I was leaving Geneva. Here, among his bride's people, I have heard many more details. Her parents are fine people, very Scotch. It is a type I am very fond of; they never waste words and never fail in deeds. You can trust them. It was good to find out more exactly what my son wants to do, for he never says much about himself. So here we are immersed in business-like discussions of what we can do for our children. The photographs of Joan are really charming. She is tall and dark, and in her face there is a dash of something Southern, such as one sometimes finds in Scots. They have been working together for a considerable time, investigating the effects of irrigation on such diseases as malaria and schistosomiasis. Rupert has developed several of the ideas of Bancroft and Manson, but now he has reached a point where he must

continue his researches in several districts of Assam. It can only be done during the cold weather, say from October to January. He could get away for three months, but he has no one who would look after his cultures and preparations during his absence. Only by a miracle could he find a suitable man in the short time still left to him, so the work will have to be postponed for another year. If he had someone too whom he could hand over the most important matters, he could marry and set out for Assam at once, but it must be someone who is used to India and the Indians and speaks the language—that is the great difficulty. I know how all this is worrying him. It seems so absurd to let oneself be held up by something so external. At his age it would have driven me nearly mad.

Darling, I have cabled him that I am coming over to take charge and that he is to go ahead with his preparations. Yesterday I had a long cabled reply from him: he is vastly relieved and grateful and tells me of various things he urgently needs for his work. As soon as I leave here I shall go to Cambridge and London to see some men who are experts in his branch, and find out what new equipment I can get for him. I must also get my old pith-helmet and the rest of the tropical outfit from Cox's where some of my trunks are in storage. I reckon I shall be ready to sail at the end of August. I shall be in London on the 20th, at the Savoy Hotel.

Will you write me there?

Meanwhile, amidst all our discussions, the heather is in full bloom and the country a thing of marvellous beauty—so beautiful that I feel I ought not to see it without you. The Highlands are almost at our back door, a few hours by car and we are in the mountains. As a little boy I was much encouraged by those great "relations" of mine, for they are all Bens—Ben Macdhui, Ben More, Ben Dearg, Ben Attow, Ben Nevis, and I was pleased to find a little country town not far away by the name of Tarland. Now Scottish blood will really be coming into the family. I am all in favour of

it. We shall have splendid opportunities in the Old World; and I cannot see why the New World alone should get all the benefit of it. Joan's father and I must have met somewhere in India; we recognized each other immediately, but neither of us has the faintest idea where or when. He was some years in the central administration at Simla. Every morning we waded up the hill-stream, equipped with fishing-rods and artificial flies. In Scotland one is always wet, voluntarily or otherwise. So it is best to combine the two, which is why anglers are so often out in the rain. One can do that excellently here—and at the same time one can enjoy so much friendly silence. . . .

Monna, my beloved, my friend! To you my life with all its bonds! To you my heart with its freedom! I cannot get to Berlin again before I sail. It is better for me to concentrate all the strength of my heart on my return in February. It is not so terribly long to wait. . . . Time will pass when I get down to work. All his life my son has never asked anything that caused me trouble. So for once the scales must be weighted in his favour. That is only fair. I kiss you, my soul, my prayer, my happiness and my dream!

Always your BEN

SAVOY HOTEL, LONDON,  
*Wednesday, August 20,*

*Grüss Gott*, Ben! There was nothing for it. If my letters make so little impression that you "still do not know," as you say in your letter, I must come and tell you myself. You must certainly go out to India—there is no question about that—it has to be, and I must bear it. But first there is something we must decide—now, at once, before we go down to dinner together. Come and call for me. The number of my room is 443.

And now, just one word more, Beloved, Beloved. I am—

I cannot help it—"for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, till death us do part"

Your MONNA

P. & O. MAIL STEAMER "VICEROY OF INDIA,"

*Night, September 6, 1930*

*Between Marseilles and Port Said*

I watched the last lights on the shore, the last lightship, till my eyes were burning. It did me a world of good to feel the wild south-easter blowing through my hair, tearing at me till I had to brace myself against it with all my strength. I know not what to do with the floods of happy strength, the happy longings that stream through me. I have absorbed you so completely that I can feel nothing but pure, overflowing happiness. I am not alone yet; I have not parted from you yet; even physically I feel that you are still in my arms. I hold you. You are here. . . . I always yearn for you, even when you are so near that I need only stretch out my hand to touch you. And so I feel that you are here now, that we are inseparable. Nowhere but here on deck could I endure the rest of to-night, here in this breath-taking wind that rushes back towards the shore. It will cool us down before we come into the desert air at Suez, and have to skulk between the yellow shores of the Canal. When we get there we shall know it is still the hot season and early to be making this trip. But it does not matter to me, nothing matters to me, so long as the days and weeks stream past like the irresistible waters beside our ship. We cut through them straight and speedy as gods. But no, what I hear and feel is only the high anthem of my own surging, overflowing happiness. Water and wind—they are singing in my own blood. . . .

Here in the bows I am comfortable and quite alone. I am sitting in the lee of one of the big ventilators, for I must write to you, my love, my heart's love! Are you writing to me too? I know you are doing so to-night. To-morrow it

will be such a comfort to know that our trusty Jeanpierre is driving you back to Berlin in our car, of which every inch is so familiar to me. It was a good thing I sent for Jeanpierre. You cannot imagine how childishly pleased I am that you are keeping the car. In some strange way it is a pledge, a proof, that you have really married me, that you will not go away again, but are coming to me! . . . How is it possible for one to feel so happy, so wildly happy, despite the three months that lie before us, so happy that I feel it in my eyes, now at this moment, and it is not caused by the wind, Monna.

I divide the three months into weeks, twelve handy weeks, connected by the strong belt of mail-days, two in each. No one who has not lived in India knows what that means. When it has been properly started, that belt, and the wheels are turning, time will flow like a stream. It is that connecting belt of the mail-days that keeps things moving over there for those who are homesick. It keeps their days in place, mounted in the great rhythm that fits the individual smoothly and harmoniously into the whole. And before you know what has happened, the ship has taken the other course, the right one—homeward!

Every hour until that day comes I must live on the reserve of happiness that began to be stored up the moment I took your letter from the table in my London hotel—that still incredible moment, an everlasting miracle, which can never happen again in all eternity. At that moment I was utterly hopeless, for the hall-porter had no letter for me when I arrived. It was all like a bad dream. Only a few days and I was to embark for India. And then, there was your letter on my table—I can still feel the incredulous surprise with which I looked down at it—fallen from heaven, without a stamp!

Then came the walk to your room, the door! No, I shall never fully comprehend it, never take it in like a “rational man” and order it in my memory as an hour of the past. It will remain unbelievable, a miracle. The opening door, the wide-open windows towards the Thames, the scent, the

unforgettable scent, the sweet breath of your life and presence about me, completely surrounding me. What did we say when we looked at each other, before words and looks were extinguished in each other's arms?

I go through my thoughts, my memories, as though they were the world's most beautiful garden, where everything that is lovely and gracious and holy and healing blooms simultaneously. My bed of flowers, my green meadow, my deep well! Beloved, best beloved woman! I look out across the water and my eyes see nothing, for happiness is washing over me unceasingly, in great waves. . . .

That evening in London—the great restaurant—how can one be so intoxicatingly alone among so many people?—all the little problems that cropped up, only to settle themselves! Everything swept along before that joyous wind, that *vent propice* that blew from heaven. My anxiety at the precious minutes slipping past, at the spectre of departure so menacingly near, and then the gradual, heavenly realization that we should have a precious week while the ship was getting round to Marseilles, where we could reach it by rail, saving time, time! To be alone, to go off alone through the dearest, loveliest places in the English countryside, places which I had shunned, because I had not wanted to see them without you. But now—it all opened like the hedge of thorns in the fairy tale, in spite of that glorious heritage of the War, which St. Bureau-cratus has not spared us even in England. Home Office, Foreign Office, German Consulate—my old friend Deane, of the Kensington Museum, managed everything, even the special licence for the wedding, and was delighted to help us. No one could have a better friend than him, and Bertrand is growing up like his father. Everything went by clockwork that morning; the boys arrived punctually to the minute from Scotland with the car to drive us round to the Register Office. Every day I shall find it harder to believe that it all really and truly happened. Monna! That immersion in the deep peace of the country between the green undulations of the

downs, the Vale of Avalon under the moon, the River Severn—and we two together! Was it not ineradicable, indestructible, that happy hour in the garden on that evening of thunder when we first entered into the infinite spaces? Do you remember what you wrote me? “Is it not breath-takingly splendid, the presentiment of spaces opening before one?” You looked out from your homeland into mine, and I entered into yours with every glance into your eyes—is there anything we could not give each other from such abundance? Could I bear you to feel the bond between us as anything but an entry into ever wider spaces, ever deeper freedom, as anything but a deep, secure sense of being at home? I want to be close to your precious, flowering life, close to you, my joy, my pride! For besides my unspeakable love for you, I am so proud, so deeply, fraternally proud of you! I want to serve you as long as I have breath. Henceforth that is the meaning of my life. When I come back in the spring we will build the house we want, by the lake, in the big meadow, among the larches. My big house shall remain open to the people it has always served. But we two will build what we really want, a house with a great broad frontage, darling, my unspeakably dear one, with two studies side by side looking over the lake—a house that is open when we need it, and closed whenever we like, a house for you where you can come and go between your two homelands, your house, where you are wrapped in my love, truly at home and, above all, free.

Now the first of the passengers to India are beginning their resolute morning tramp round the deck, round and round, heavy-footed. How much of the sorrow of parting, how much despondency, are thus trodden underfoot—carried and wrestled with for miles, to be got rid of, once for all. My respects to them. Some of them have a pretty hard time of it. They need a clear head and a steady heart, for Asia will soon be upon them.

My cabin will be a secret and inexhaustible solace for all the days to come. We were alone there yesterday evening;

there is your photograph, just as you placed it, there the spray of heather. There you stood, leaning against my shoulder, taking in the little room in a long, sweet glance. And then you raised your eyes to me. That look is your most private and delightful secret, the secret of the loveliest, dearest eyes in the world! And leaning closer you gave me your lips like a cup, Monna, a cup from which I drink and drink again, quenching the thirst of separation—till the morning dawns that restores and compensates for all things.

Your BEN

HÔTEL DE NOAILLES, MARSEILLES,  
*Night, September 6, 1930*

BELOVED,

Suddenly the searchlight went out and the great ship disappeared into the night. I waited for a while to see if I should be able to make her out again when my eyes had become accustomed to the darkness, but I could not find her. The wind whistled, and the place where she had been was empty, and other waves than those that had borne you away were long since dashing against the quay. "And you, my love, bide here," is what the band plays on board a German steamer when she leaves port. Surely your mother must have sung that Swabian folk-song to her Frieder. Perhaps it was as well that it was beneath the dignity of the S.S. *Viceroy* to play it. It was as much as I could bear to see you standing there on deck under the searchlight, in the windy night.

"And your tears how they flow, when a wandering I must go." That my heart could sing unaided. But this is how it goes on:

"When the long year is o'er, I'll go wandering no more,  
But mine and thine I'll be.  
If still thou art my own sweetheart,  
My troth I'll plight to thee."



"Mine and thine"—that we are this day, and, thank God, we have plighted our troth—nor will our parting last a year. Let it not be too long, Beloved, Beloved. And now I must take care, or you will find suspicious marks on my quotations, such as Semmele left on that foreboding utterance of Ernest Schulze. Sometimes one would give anything to be able to cry one's heart out like a child. There is nothing so symbolical of parting as a ship sailing out into the night. The impenetrable night, interposing itself twixt "mine and thine," brings home to me all that parting means, has ever meant, and will always mean. Forgive me; I am not being very brave. But how can I be, now that those weeks are over? As soon as I realized that I could not but follow you to London, I lived for the moment when I should hear you knocking at my door. And now I am sitting again in a hotel bedroom, just as I was that evening when I was awaiting the most blissful hour—the most infinitely beautiful thing that has ever happened, when all the repressed joy of that month burst into flower in a single moment. To be able to give you such happiness, Ben, what an unspeakable privilege! Do you remember that day when we worshipped together in the little church at Mornex? The feeling that all that was mine was now utterly yours shot through me almost like a thrill of fear, and all that my worship amounted to was seeking refuge from that feeling in prayer. I tried to tell you about it in halting words, but as yet I did not know—ah, how immensely remote I was still from that final and deepest wonder of "thine and mine." And then, in those blissful days on the Cornish moors and cliffs, when everything was so overwhelming, crags and sea, and wind, and colours, and the primeval mysteries that haunt the sacred well—once again all that was in me was abashed and humbled, more than ever before, in adoration of this truth: you were the fountain that rose in all the depths of my soul.

And now, hour by hour, I count the miles that are dividing us. I have a positively physical sensation of your being carried ever farther and farther away from me. While I was writing

these pages, I was gazing after you a long, long time. Do you know the ancient German song of the wife who was left behind?

“Though he be gone from me, my gaze  
Doth follow him upon his ways.  
My fingers five shall waft to him  
Five and fifty cherubim.”

What else was there that she could do for him?

How lovely it will be to drive home in your car—all by myself. I shall keep pretending that my hand is in your coat pocket. Thank you again and again. How strange it will seem to be back in Berlin—as if come from another planet, or out of a dream—or still in a dream, perhaps. I shall try—and across those thousands of miles you will help me—I shall try to weld together those two worlds, “thine and mine.” I believe that I can do work which will be a testimony to our love. I believe that we have, in this troubled world, a mission to fulfil, to which fate calls us, over and above ourselves. Be it great or small, however much or however little it may sway the forces of to-day, there are few who are in a position to fulfil that mission. In that respect at least our vocation is clear.

You have had so much to bear, my only love, because of my ineradicable absorption in my own people—even to your resolve to go away, so as to leave me time. But let me tell you to-night—the first night in which I am alone once more—what was revealed to me under that dark cloud which enveloped us both: I must be in your roots, if I am to be in my own.

Good night, Beloved. The wind is blowing in through the open window, bringing with it the scent of the sea and the night, from that far distance where you are now. You come to me—you abide with me. And I remain your own.



GEORGE ALLEN & UNWIN LTD  
LONDON: 40 MUSEUM STREET, W.C.1  
LEIPZIG: (F. VOLCKMAR) HOSPITALSTR. 10  
CAPE TOWN: 73 ST. GEORGE'S STREET  
TORONTO: 91 WELLINGTON STREET, WEST  
BOMBAY: 15 GRAHAM ROAD, BALLARD ESTATE  
WELLINGTON, N.Z.: 8 KINGS CRESCENT, LOWER HUTT  
SYDNEY, N.S.W.: AUSTRALIA HOUSE, WYNYARD SQUARE





